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SIN

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HEADPRESS

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EDITORIAL

Things have been busy this last year at Headpress Stables. By the time you're reading this, the fully revised **KILLING FOR CULTURE** (pub: Creation Books) ought to be in the shops – new pictures, new text, new book. The latest releases on the Headpress Critical Vision imprint are now available – the Sex Religion Death compendium, **CRITICAL VISION**, and the bilious short story collection, **THE EYES**. Already things are well underway with regard to the 1996 release of two film books – **SLIMETIME: A GUIDE TO SLEAZY, MINDLESS, MOVIE ENTERTAINMENT** by Steve Puchalski (of **SHOCK CINEMA**, should an introduction be in order), and **THE X FACTORY: INSIDE THE AMERICAN HARDCORE FILM INDUSTRY** by our own Anthony Petkovich (who else better qualified for the job, mm?).

Books lead us on to our next point. Not wishing to compromise the quality of the magazine because of our increased publishing schedule, **HEADPRESS** will be available on a twice-yearly basis as of now (no big surprise really, considering that it's been nigh on an aeon since the last **HEADPRESS** anyway). That is, two bumper packed issues as opposed to the usual three or four per year. There will also be a new look to the magazine as of No.12 – a better one, naturally.

Video nasties!? For a future project, **HEADPRESS** would like to hear from any one who has had altercations with the law (or family and friends – we're not proud) re. video cassettes. That's right, from the introduction of the Video Recordings Bill to the present day, if the boys in blue have touched your shoulders because of video tapes – uncertified, pirates, whatever – please write to us courtesy of the Headpress address. Even interesting anecdotes will do. Names will be taken in confidence if so requested. (But please, don't write in requesting tapes – you know as well as we do that 'video nasties' are *illegal*...)

David Kerekes

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Transgression goes global on Pay-Per-View... Or: Why even bugging the Pope don't Cut It

Howard Lake

The problem is this: I can't promise not to sin any more for the simple reason I have never sinned in all my living days. I have no concept of sin; sin doesn't exist, not in this world, not in any world. It sure as hell doesn't exist in the supposed Heaven awaiting any abortionist-killing crucifix-fucker from Oregon, but then, in his eyes, sin doesn't exist here on earth, either; like, if the Ten Commandments, surely the top God-felchin' arbiter of what sin is and what it ain't – you know, the EZ-Read version for slow learners – can be topped by that ol' 'eye-fer-an-eye etc' stand-by, no wonder us secular types find it hard to keep track of the plot. Jesus wept, when even them with their ear to the glorious golden trumpeting arse of The Lord can't tell the difference, damned I'll be if I'm gonna try and comprehend it...

Besides, things haven't been easy around here of late... the blow has been shite, rank attitude and bad odor is fucking everywhere, beer tastes like chemicalized crud, the wife got pulled for possession of a dope-crumb that wouldn't get your pubic lice high, and suddenly every piss-ant TV production crew from Shepherds Bush to Charlotte Street are turning into fully paid-up members of Apocalysts Anonymous... all searching for What This Deep 'n' Dark Obsessive Shit Means and quite happy to throw mans' inhumanity to man at us, severed limbs first,

before knocking off for a *fettucine alfredo* down at the Bistro di Ponytailed Felchii...

In other words, sin is all around – and featured on **Panorama** in ways that'd get you busted by HM Customs were you to show it to your mates on some spot of video-grew you snuck back from A/Dam, for example. Call me a member of the cocksuckin' clergy, but it all seems you can't throw up in any direction without coming face to face with SIN in all its gruesome glory. Sure as shit you can't turn on the teevee without it being rammed down yr throat: if it ain't decomposing bodies in the streets of Sierra Leone then it's skanky Yank strippers shoving their jewelbox at you over on 4, or some Bad Hair Day in Oklahoma City (*Damn*, don't them Yanks cut up *bad* over one little fertilizer bomb? Still, put another \$ in the NORaid tin, that'll make you feel better)... Sin, sleaze, iniquity, perfidy – welcum to the wonderful world of entertainments...

For a confirmed voyeur like your correspondent this is as good as it gets. For those whom, like yours truly, herald the onrushing societal Armageddon from the safety of the G-Plan battlezone, there's never been a better time to invest in an extended-play VCR (w/ NTSC & Secam) to capture all those juicy out-takes from the terminal twitchings of civilization. And for sinners, well, I guess the sinners just keep on doing what sinners do and what they've always done – only now, with a bit of luck, you get to host your own TV show later on (Yeah, Mr Stone NBK was one hard-hitting mutha of a satire – and *such* an original idea, too!). Hell, I'd be in there like a shot, grabbing my share of the limelight and getting to cosy up to the might all-absolving bosom of Oprah and tellin' 'em why – the Crack, the Smack, the Cack – I'd be there, too, if only... if only

–Like stated previously, just can't think of any damn way to sin. Nights spent in deep contemplation of the dark forces that bind us all, that guide us all and... no, nothing, not a thing. I could get the local kindergarten crazy on PCP; engage the services of the mentally deficient in the filming of bestiality movies featuring Rag, Tag & bobtail; I could become – in tabloid-speak – the MOST EVIL MAN ON EARTH! but somehow I get the feeling, somehow I know, this isn't what sinning is all about... What it *is* about I have even less of an idea, but in a world where sin is so vaguely defined as to completely evaporate when any notion of what it actually is gets couched, when we've inspired atrocities for which a poxy word like 'sin' barely seems adequate, well, what chance for a poor sinner to ever hone their art, huh?

Sure, we all know what Sin™ is – according to the Polack dress-wearer in the Vatican, Sin® (all trademarks and likenesses thereof registered © The Holy Father) means fucking with a rubber... and thereby playing no part in slowing the spread of AIDS, or raising a family too large to feed and upping the infant mortality rate, or stretching national

resources beyond endurance point, causing genocide... while you promenade yr priceless art treasures and play 'goosey-goosey' with the Paedophile Priest of the Week (winner gets all crimes whitewashed and a cosy li'l retainer somewhere quiet) – I expect JP2's very proud he *knows* at least one example of Sin. I'm certain he knows more, but I wasn't brought up a Catholic and thus know little of the delights of venial or mortal sin or what have you – that's right, all those CRIMES AGAINST GOD that mean you'll for sure be basement-bound; yup, all those *heinous* crimes 'gainst The Lord like a sneaky spotta knuckle-shufflin' by some acne-encrusted 14-yr-old, which, of course, are *far* more loathsome in de sight of de Lord than any amount of Papal-blessed Conquistador rape-n-pillage expeditions and so on. As we all know, God'll take a killer over a pervert any day... Damn, does that count me out for membership of the Flagellants, too? Killjoys!

Sin means you go to Hell, right? Hmm, folks have been telling me to go to Hell for years and I still haven't found the fucking place on the AA routemap (hold up, someone says try Merthyr Tydfil; hmmm, biased methinks). But even if we knew where the damn place was at, we still don't know what accreditation's required to get past the Infernal Bouncer, 'cause... we STILL DON'T KNOW

WHAT Sin is. If one transgression minus repentance guarantees Damnation, then why stop at merely whacking off over a copy of **Housewives In Heat?** Might as well be damned for wholesale infanticide, too.

But you know what *isn't* sin, don't you...? Poisoning millions with toxic farts from your chemical plant ain't sin – not if culpability gets waived by a Court of Law. Massacring by the nationload, that's clean too – providing your mullah or your bishop or your guru tells you it's fine. This is secular world, and morality is beholden only to the laws of man (unless you're some religious retard who'd blow away your butthole on the say-so of a mad cleric with a cheesy cock who *assures* you Paradise waits – SUCKER), so surely one of the few sins remaining, and the only one that really counts, is the Sin of Getting Caught? You don't have to look far to find that one... 'A wonderful chappie, he was, friend of Her Maj,

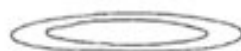
don'tchaknow? Terrible shame about getting caught with his hand in the till... Still, try the old Alzheimer's ruse, what?' But hang on, if Sin starts being arbitred by those who make the Law, and if those are some of the sleaziest, most corrupt SOBs ever to compare dick-sizes in the Garrick Club kharzi, then... Oh, right, yeah. But then I knew we were fucked from the start; everything I've written so far is only to wait till the funny white pills kick in; perhaps the SP on truth exists only as a primeval memory, something we are aware of, but which doesn't cause us to lose that much sleep. Maybe the best approach to Sin as a living, concrete concept is: Aaah, SHIT... who the fuck cares? I mean, who the fuck *truly* cares..?

Yeah, we might not know exactly what Sin is; we might not be able to quantify it precisely, but we sure as shit know it's FUN. Whether we're doing it ourselves, or vicariously enjoying other hard-working folk sinning for our delectation, you can't deny that, compared to godliness, sin has not only the best tunes, but all the most fascinating emotions, too – particularly these days, in a time where we're that damn jaded a cracking good slaying, preferably with a side-order of sexual mutilation, shoots shit over **Noel's House Party** (gratuitous humiliation and sadistic pleasure of another kind,

but we can at least comfort ourselves with the thought that Edmonds might suck Satan's dick, but the Dark Master sure as shit can't knit a sweater).

And in a world where practically every remotely pleasurable activity has been proscribed virtually out of existence, where the PC Police and Moral Enforcement Squads lie in wait for the first SOB to even think about it, you just know that when you're having a good time you must be committing *some* kind of sin.

But these aren't the old sins, the one-way ticket to Ol'Nick's Incinerator kinda sins; these days we got new sins, all nice 'n' shiny and fresh out the showroom. 90s Sin isn't just getting caught, it's behaviour that becomes profane because it rubs against the grain of consensus thought; it's something you might do that **The Sun** doesn't approve of. And hey, you don't even have to *do* it; simply *thinking* it is enough. Simply suggesting you might have a right



Art © Dogger



to lead an existence counter to the neatly-ordered consensoid milieu is enough to have you hauled into the dock at today's equivalent of the witch trial – pillory by tabloid. Why? Because you choose something The Majority of Decent-Thinking People believe to be abhorrent; be it a penchant for proscribed chemicals and herbs, or a desire to get kinky with your Black & Decker Workmate, or wanting to live your life in some fucked-up bus parked in the Welsh Hills, whatever... you are sinning. You are sinning because Society wants to save you from yourself and you, you recidivist you, won't accept the assistance proffered by the caring, sharing world of the consensoid. You commit the mortal sin of NOT WANTING everything this bright-n-shiny Brave New World has to offer, so fucking CRAZY you cannot see the beauty of fixed-rate mortgages, the wonder of satellite TV, the Godsend of private healthcare. Who gives a toss what's the New Rock-n-Roll? When we have created and technologized ourselves to the point we are out-creating God, then the Ordered Consumer Society becomes the New God... and rejecting that is as sure a way to damnation as crapping on a crucifix would have been back in 14th Century Rome.

No matter that beneath the shiny exterior of the OSC the whole thing is decaying, corrupt and stinks more than skunkshit. A righteous believer never sees what's underneath. The fact the Catholic church payroll sometimes resembles a Paedophile Information Exchange mailing list doesn't prevent the pious keeping the thing going, and just because our leaders (the bishops or cardinals of the faith) take bribes, lie, cheat, sell entire nations down the Swanny to line their own pockets, use whatever means at their disposal to maintain a desperate hold on control and power doesn't mean we should not believe in them. The alternative to belief is too horrible to contemplate. Hell beckoned for those medieval madmen who denied the existence of God; to deny the glory of the OSC means a different kind of hell. And the torments of the damned can get mighty extreme... shit, it could even mean the withdrawal of your credit rating, for Chrissakes! All the more reason to obey the tenets of this new faith: work hard, budget wisely, indulge ye not in the temptations of sex, drugs and anti-social thinking...

Just as the Gulags lay in wait for those who questioned Soviet orthodoxy, so bucking the consensus carries penalties of its own. You'd be dumb, crazy, INSANE to want to stand in the way of progress. After all, what's so damn wrong with progress anyhow? Do you not WANT to inhabit the World of the Next Millennium, a society with all the awkward lumps smoothed out and smoothed over? Homogeneity = Safety & Security... why would anyone not want that? The orthodoxy holds true What We All Want is a quiet life. Fuck you, you perverts, deviants, you backsliders... your leaders

have – in YOUR interest – put any amount of time and effort, not to mention billions of bucks, into building the new church of the OSC and a glorious, wondrous edifice it is, too... now why do you feel compelled to point out the cracks in the foundations, the chipped paintwork, the fact the thing sways in high winds, etc. Look, from a distance it looks damn nice, doesn't it? That not good enough for you, huh???

So, shit, we're condemned to sin the rest of our days. As long as there exist those crazy bastards who believe in truth and beauty in the anomalies of existence, as long as there exist perverts who fail to accept to the orthodoxy as handed down by St Rupert, as long as there exist those idiots who still insist on celebrating all that which stands outside or in opposition to the new thinking, then we'll never get this New World Order shit off the ground. Eliminate all irrational thought? Make such thinking a Sin? Who knows? In the future maybe these disbelievers could be pilloried live on TV, their pathetic obsessions and beliefs torn to shreds by a panel of the highest thinkers of the day – Littlejohn, Bushell, Helms, Gingrich, etc – before meeting the fate of all those other fags, deviants, weird-thinkers, slackers, drug-fiends, alienated youth and so on... make for a great spot on Noel's House Party, don't you think..?

Yours, felching the Pontiff in a rubber-lined Confessional...

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DAYS IN PALOOKAVILLE

Jennifer Blowdryer

I hesitate to call myself even a low level celebrity, because in the over populated land mass that is my home, only a few hundred of my fellow countrymen have ever heard the name Jennifer Blowdryer. Out of these few hundred, roughly 450 have some vague idea of what it is I do, and even this sketchy understanding will vary, depending on if they saw me sing in a small bar or club, run an erotic variety show, or read aloud. They also may have once read something by me: a book, an article in a weekly, or a reprint in an arty journal.

This is still more than I expected, having started out with a past that was too unpleasant for self-confidence, yet not wretched enough to give me the manic drive of a Barbara Streisand. A small-money circuit has slowly developed for people like me, ex-rockers, poets, and sobered up street punks who have logged in serious time learning to do something just for the hell of it. Promoters like us because as long-time inhabitants of palookaville, we know it's not enough to just stand up and quietly read in a monotone, but we're not as noisy or expansive as a band or a real celebrity.

In this circuit, there is no clearly defined hierarchy. Occasionally we are paid \$100 or more for a reading in some toney, packed, gallery, but the next week we may find ourselves as a throwaway opening act, gamely plowing our material in front of a few indifferent barflies for \$6 or less. Rather than moving up, we sort of move out, performing in more and more places.

Poet Paul Beatty and I were thrilled to be selected to perform in Amsterdam, although I suspect Paul, who won the Nuyoricon Poetry Slam and gets college gigs, does a little bit better than me on the average. I left New York a day earlier than him, so that I could

work with my Dutch accompanist and be rested for my first show. Being mostly unemployed and more than a little marginal has freed up my schedule no end. Nobody but my boyfriend and the 10-year-old girl I tutor for two hours a week would have noticed I was gone, if I hadn't told as many people as possible that I had an actual expenses paid gig in Europe. I tried to sound as casual about it, even though I'd been thinking about it on and off for a solid year in advance.

On my flight over to Amsterdam I got bounced up to Ambassador class, and sat right near a large gay guy from Miami who was going to do a ballroom dancing/cabaret act with his ballerina partner at a first class club. He'd opened for Diana Ross and Cher, and even as I obligingly sniffed the container of Elizabeth Taylor's Passion that he's bought at Customs, I could tell I wasn't that important in his scheme of things. He is a Showperson and I am an Act, but with that out of the way we had an OK time knocking back Kalua, playing Gin Rummy, and watching *Sister Act*. "Have a nice life!" he gently hinted the minute the plane stopped on the runway, so I carefully distanced myself from the scented cabaret star and his manager/coach as we waited for our luggage.

I had packed the usual gear for gigs — chap books I hoped to sell, cassette tapes of my music for an accompanist to learn, make up, and stacks of unpublished manuscripts that I always think I might read from but seldom do. When I did Smut Fests I also needed several changes of flimsy costumes, but Amsterdam was getting a frumpy Blowdryer. I was there to peddle myself as a writer, but worried a little over the extremely flattering black and white Eric Kroll photo I'd sent.

In the photo, I am mostly blonde, and my face glances over my naked shoulder with a worry-free pout that I can hardly ever achieve after six years of living in New York. My hair is now a mottled black, and my face is usually screwed up into a tense little ball. "Come hither" has been replaced by "go away". I knew my hosts might be a little surprised at how sloppy and tired I looked, but kept trying to convince myself that I was there as a writer so it didn't really matter.

Eric, a tall, handsome Dutch looking 22-year-old, recognised me anyway, and he and his partner Sid walked me to a small borrowed car as I chattered nervously, trying to seem fun. Eric had already asked me if I wouldn't mind just staying at his apartment instead of a hotel. Since I'd never stayed in a hotel before, and was desperate to seem agreeable, I said no, I wouldn't mind at all. When we got to his place, I spread myself out on the thin couch in what turned out to be the front room, just to show what an extra relaxed and undemanding visiting performer I was.

I kept talking to Eric and Sid, trying to figure out



Jennifer Blowdryer Photo Eric Kroll

what it was they were passionate about. I'm used to being in an underground run and surrounded by various types of romanticism, since only a romantic would meddle around as a promoter in spoken word or performance poetry. There is no money and little power. They politely answered my questions and gave me coffee, but something was missing. When they left me to try and catch a nap before doing a radio show I noticed that I could hear the sound of cars passing by on the street, and that only a glass door separated me from the living room. Eric slapped 300 Guilders down on a table and said "That's it" in

a firm voice, meaning this would be both my pay and budget, after the airfare. He had shown me a package of all the publicity, and to my dismay the photo of me as a pouty semi-nude blonde was all over club calendars, weekly newspapers, and advertisements. There was no escaping it. I saw something about "ex-punk" and something about "stripper", and desperately wished that I could get more visual and schtick that minute to live up to the blurbs.

"It's a performer's dream, sleeping in public!" I joked weakly when Eric and Sid came back to get me after an uneasy nap. The fact is that I'm not really a flexible, easy going, hobo type, and can only pretend to be one for about a day. The noisy and unprivate sleeping quarters irritated me. On

the way to the radio show I eyed a snack shop and asked if they'd get me a coffee, but after a hasty consultation in Dutch Eric and Sid took me to a nice restaurant. It was darkish, wooden, and had little rugs over each table. We sat around a table and got our tiny coffees with light biscuits on the side. I felt like I had to keep some type of conversation up, still going with my fun, casual, act, but really had nothing to say. I had wanted to grab a quick paper cup at the snack shop, New York style. Sitting down at a table with small coffee cups and biscuits on the side is something you only do in Manhattan when you've

known somebody for years, or are desperate for companionship. Secretly I wanted to coil up like a snake, conserving my always small amount of energy for my 10 minutes on the air. At the show a DJ was interviewing an older man who had some missing teeth.

"He is a great Dutch poet," Eric and Sid informed me. "They are talking about Bob Dylan." Sure enough, in between their chatting, Bob Dylan's croaky voice sang away. "What are you going to read?" the kids kept asking me. I was still being easy going so I didn't tell them to leave me alone, that I never know what I'm going to read or say and like it that way. When I got in the room, the DJ looked busy and distracted. This was not going to be any Nirvana where I suddenly got more than the usual few minutes on the air.

"I think I'm going to ask you about Clinton," he said nicely.

"I'm not that political," I had to say.

When we got on the air, it didn't go much better. "So, I see you've written a book about slang! Can you tell me some slang?" the DJ asked. The problem was that I had written the book about slang in 1984, and it was the only book I didn't bring a copy of with me to the radio show. Forced to fall back on honesty, I had to tell him that not only didn't I know any new slang, I was not a teenager. Since I never used to like older people who acted like teenagers when I was one, so I had not bothered to keep up with new slang. I noticed too late his can of beer and faded rock 'n' roll tour shirt. A real pro, he stuck it out to the end, and asked me to read on the air.

I read the first paragraph of three different pieces, unable to get comfortable with any of them. I'm lousy on the air. Eric and Sid ushered me out of the radio station, stunned into silence.

"Do you have any idea how many people were listening to you?" Sid asked. They were too tactful to tell me I was bad, but even if I'd been good it probably wouldn't have been entertaining in a splashy, crowd drawing way. I am neither a zealot nor a ranter, and once again I felt like some kind of let down.

The next day wasn't much better. "Wake up, your piano player is coming in 10 minutes!" chirped Eric who, not being a woman or New Yorker, didn't know that it takes up to an hour and two cups of coffee to face anything. The pianist, Herbon Bisschop, was a young pony tailed music student with wire rim glasses and a casual outfit. I played the tape of a couple of songs, and he played something else entirely on piano.

"Can you at least do the changes that are in the song?" I asked him, still smiling but gritting my teeth a little.

"It's not really what I do," Herbon said, smiling bigger. He smiled and nodded a lot, but I didn't yet know that he didn't really understand all my English. All the ambiguous palaver I have learned to use with

musicians when I want them to do something my way was not only wasted on him, it just made things completely confusing. We didn't really get anything done at our one hour rehearsal. I just wanted the songs played the way they were written, but kept trying to accommodate Herbon's avant-garde deconstructive piano technique. I felt like an old fashioned carny, and was ashamed that I didn't really want any subtle avant-garde piano accompaniment. I wanted to do the routine numbers in my act.

Next we went to the production company office. Paul Beatty was there, looking tired, as well as Ben, the head promoter. Ben was an older guy who'd squired around the best of them, from Gregory Corso to Jim Carroll. I'd met him once in New York already, with a suspiciously euphoric looking Herbert Hunke. A young, good looking and slightly severe woman was there from a television show, and she interviewed me a little to see if she'd do a segment on me.

She asked me who I wanted to be like, did I want to be like Lydia Lunch, what was it I wanted. I told her I was different than Lydia Lunch and, seeing her face tighten, knew that I would get nowhere with her. Lydia Lunch has always inspired a fierce loyalty in her supporters, and the girl from the TV show thought I was insulting her because I said I didn't want to be her. That's how loyal people get. I think it's partly because she admits to being incested by her father, which inspires a fierce empathy, and partly because she's an amazingly seductive person to interview.

The woman from the TV show left, smiling curtly, and when my hosts asked me when my TV appearance was scheduled I was embarrassed to tell them that I didn't think there would be one. Paul and I were taken to do another radio show, where we were supposed to be interviewed and then read on the air. We got sodas, but the Coca Cola tasted different than in America, and was slightly flat. This time the DJ asked me if I thought rappers were poets, a question which I deferred to Paul.

"They say they're poets. I guess, these days, if you say you're a poet you're a poet," Paul thoughtfully replied. Then the DJ asked me if I was like Karen Finley.

"No," I had to honestly reply. Just when I started scanning my material, wondering what would be best to read on the air, a woman buzzed in and said, "We need the chairs," which meant we were kicked out and Paul and I didn't get to read after all. We went to a Literary cafe with Herbon and Eric, and waited for Ben to come and join us. I squirmed around, trying to get fed. I remembered the French Fries with peanut sauce and mayonnaise I'd had at a snack shop the night before, where an Egyptian worker had asked if I was American. I was interested in the way all the many cultures in Amsterdam seemed to result in different fast food, and I wanted

to try all the snack food I could. I pulled out my little tourist guide book, and looked for common Dutch snacks.

"Broodgee. I want Broodgee," I said to Eric, who looked confused. Tired and a little cranky, I felt newly frustrated. Where was the damn snack food, and why was everything moving so slow. Finally Ben came, and took us to an Italian restaurant. What would Dutch people know about Italian food compared to the Italian food in New York, I wondered briefly, before remembering that Italy is in Europe. The food was great, and Ben took us to his Artists Club, a large second storey room with a bar, a pool table, and several small tables to sit around and talk. I hinted that Herbon was playing piano too avant-garde for me, and Ben chided him.

"Play the Blues for her!" he said, muttering something rapid in Dutch while I giggled nervously. I liked the Artists Club, although it was funny to see men with light blonde hair looking moody and drinking. People with those features and that complexion are such marketing icons that I had forgotten they might just be normal in another part of the world, and it was always odd to see fair haired people with small noses scowling and being quarrelsome.

Herbon and Eric stayed up that night, drunk and happy, having a loud conversation in Dutch, while I seethed in the next room. I was sick of acting friendly, and wanted to sleep for my gig the next day. I had to admit I was primarily some kind of showperson at that moment. I did not really want to have a conversation, make any new friends, or experiment, I wanted to be ready to Go On. Eric had seen my unhappiness and promised me a hotel room, right next to Paul's, but it wouldn't be ready until the night after the gig. I pounded my soft, old world, feather pillow until tiny feathers flew around the room.

At the club, a state-run place called the Milky Way, a Dutch "punk" band called the Willem Kloos Groop was rehearsing, fronted by a tall skinny blonde guy with missing teeth and a perfect Sixties style suit. I yelled at Herbon to just get a guitar and play the damn songs, and set about killing the five hours before showtime. Paul, who's normally quiet, started joking with the workers in the cafe section of the club:

"Make me a sandwich like *you* would eat!" he goaded the woman behind the counter, before going back to the kitchen area to ask the cook why she had toilet paper in her hair. Paul was doing much better than me, I realised bitterly, he actually was casual and friendly, whereas I felt tired, spacey, and demanding. It didn't help that I hadn't slept much in three days. By the time I clumped through my act, a string broke on Herbon's borrowed guitar and the two songs I did sounded hideous.

We shared the bill with three or four Dutch poets we couldn't understand, an American they had to

add at the last minute when Dominique DuPrima cancelled, the Willem Kloos Groop, and the Steven Brown Band. The other American poet was very drunk, and sort of fell off stage, and the Steven Brown Band turned out to be a couple of the guys from the old Tuxedo Moon, and a German. They live in Brussels now. The German, Nikolas Klau, said his father lived in artists housing in Hamburg, with Peter Missing, who was working on painting pretty things and appeared to be getting much better.

The Steven Brown Band guys were calm and professional, one of them did Tai Chi backstage and they all put on nice suits and slicked back their hair. They used slides, a sampler, spoken word, and Steven did a nice, smooth, sax solo. I didn't get to see their whole act because two guys from a cable show came and video taped Paul and I giving our opinions and reading, and then the woman from the TV came with a colleague, and they sat there across from me backstage while I tried desperately to act more likeable.

I went to an Artists Party in a warehouse after the gig. It was sort of annoying. Paul showed up later, and then left at four am to walk around a little. One of his new friends turned to me, and said, "There can't possibly be a market for what you do in New York!" It was on the last legs of any attempt at casual friendliness, so Eric took me back to his place, and told his roommate, Chris, to take care of me when I woke up. By this time I had graduated from irritable to being difficult.

When I woke up, Chris gently asked if I wanted coffee. He ran a bath for me, and when I got out he was reclining in the living room with a silk scarf tucked around his neck. A glass pot with a candle burning in it kept his pale tea warm as he read a book. He did not look at all like an American 26-year-old man, he looked alien and ancient. As classical music played quietly, I realised that the Dutch play everything quietly, including Tom Waits, who they have a fondness for. It is as if it were all classical. They would play Trouble Funk softly, and love it in their own way. They are different. They do not have to parade their romanticism because, unlike Americans, they are a People. I felt, at that moment, much more like a Thing.

WARNING

Occasionally we deal with people or organisations who don't like the idea of paying for goods. Generally they cough up after a few terse words. Here then are details of the first dealer who has been ignoring all requests for payment for over a year. All traders and buyers should avoid dealing with this dishonest, ignorant, character.

Helmut Nachtigall c/o Satyr Filmwelt
Buchhandelsges m.b.h., Marc Aurel-Strasse 5
1010 Wein, Germany

Any of our European friends who know this guy's home address and/or phone number, please let us know.

A FISTFUL OF AMADO

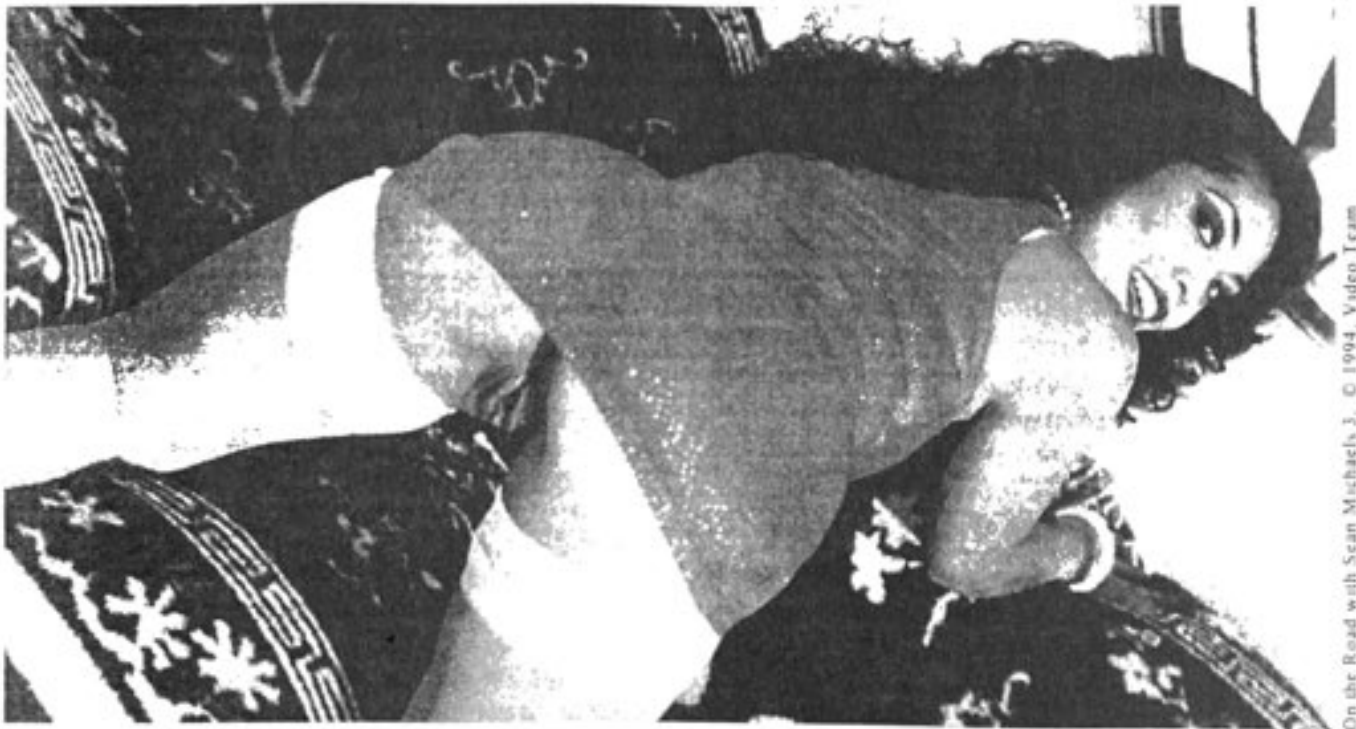
A CONVERSATION WITH THE SWEETHEART OF PORN CUMISHA AMADO

Anthony Petkovitch

Asian porn starlets. How many can you list? Not the fly-by-nighters. Not the one-hit wonders. We're talkin' regular working, prolifically fucking, highly memorable Asian sluts. Shit, you could count 'em with one hand. Mimi Miyagi, Saki St. Germaine, Kitty Yung, Anisa Carrera. Who else? The mind wanders – as does the blood in our willies. Shame on you. For decades fans have been craving more Oriental poontang. So what's the hang-up? Wake up and smell the Nagasaki nookie. The Vietnamese vadge. The Thai twat. The Philippino fill-her-buster. Give the perverts what they want. *More Asian ass!*

Perhaps Cumisha Amado's the cure. Hopefully this nasty little newcomer'll rub the sleep out of the smut galaxy's eyes and make them see sense. A luscious mix of Philippino, Japanese and Spanish, Cumisha's a turbo-charged Far Eastern vixen excelling in the arts of anal, DP, and gang bangs. But don't let those comely credentials fool you. No, siree. Cumisha's also a woman of substance (and we're not talking KY here). A mind all her own, this little cutie's ambitious (producing, directing, writing and fucking in her own films) and sincere (her soulful smile could melt the heart of even the Khmer Rouge). And the girl loves dick! – any which way she can get the stuff. I mean, how often do we find a slut (let

alone an Asian slut) who'll consume two throbbing cocks in her asshole? That's right – her asshole! And the girl's fan-friendly, too. When I saw her performing in San Francisco [with Lana Sands, also present during this interview and featuring in *Headpress 10—Eds.*], she was jumping up on chairs, wiggling her tush in fans faces like a randy bunny rabbit, sticking a double dong up her cunt and asshole, and – oh yeah, almost forgot – shoving her whole hand, all five digits, an entire *fucking fist* straight up her shitter. Now *that* was a showstopper! With her hot little brown ass to the audience, her wrist slowly disappearing into her anus, I was half expecting Cumisha to turn around and display a set



On the Road with Sean Michaels 3, © 1994, Video Team

HEADPRESS

of fingers wriggling gleefully from her open mouth. (And, yes, Baby Wipes were on hand to mop up any excess Hamburger Helper.) Amado can be found in the following video productions: **Superstar Sex Challenge 1 and 2**, **Bachelor Party, Hollywood 'Ho House**, **Hollywood In Your Face**, **Rodney Moore's Dirty Dating Service**, **Junkyard Dykes**, **Joy's Luck Club**, **Casting Call**, **Escape To The Party**, **Asian Beauties**, **Dirt Bags**, **Up The Ying Yang**, **Erotic Dripping Orientals**, **Blow Job Boulevard**, **Frathouse Sexcapades**, **Fortune Nookie**, **Rising Bun**, **On The Road With Sean Michaels**, **Deep Inside Rachel's Rear**, **Double Butts**, and **Smooth As Silk**.

HEADPRESS First off, Cumisha, I'm sure a lot of fans would love to know the breakdown of your nationality.

CUMISHA AMADO Well, I'm Spanish, Japanese and Philippino. On my mother's side; my grandmother's from Spain and my grandfather's from the Philippines. On my father's side, his mother's from Japan and his father's from the Philippines. I also understand four dialects in Philippino.

You really worked your ass off on that stage tonight.

Yeah. And they also go, 'You're so little. How can you stick your whole hand in there?' *Ha ha ha!*

I definitely want to get into that a little later. [Anthony, any editors of a weaker disposition would have sought to put a smutty innuendo in there. Not us—Iron Eds.] But let's backtrack a bit. Would you mind talking a bit about your first sexual experience?

Let's see... my first sexual experience... the first time I had sex?

Um-hm

That was when I was 16. *[Whispers]* I was a late cummer. And that was with my baby-sitter. *Ha ha ha.*

Male or female?

Male. He was 10 years older than me. And he said, 'Well, now that you're a grown woman, let me teach you a few things.' *Ha ha ha.*

He probably didn't ask for any baby-sitting money from your parents after that.

And it was easy, too — he was just down the street and around the corner. *Ha ha ha.*

Did you get off the first time 'round?

Yeah. He had a big dick. A *really* big dick. And then my pussy was so... it wasn't... you know... *[low voice]* well, it was hard for his dick to get into my pussy, you know, it was the first time. But, I got used to it after a while. *Ha ha ha.*

How long have you been in the business?

A year and a half.

Any new films you'd like to talk about? Any which stand out?

The ones that stand out... *[thinking]*... God, I've done so many... oh, well **Bachelor Parties** is a new one... um... **Junkyard Dykes**, **Smooth As Silk**. Bionca and Debi Diamond are in the Bachelor Party tape. Watch that one... a lotta high energy and... downright dirty sex. *Ha ha ha.* Debi Diamond is really wild. She jumps off the table and just *stomps* on T.T. Boy. *Ha ha ha.* A lot of action and energy in that one. You can tell all of love sex.

On the Road with Sean Michaels. *You were in one of those weren't you?*

That was fun! We did a Chinatown scene over here in San Francisco. We were in a restaurant that had these booths in it, and they were filming inside the booths.

Did you rent out the restaurant?

No. No. This is real stuff. We had lunch, closed the curtains... it was right here in San Francisco, up in Chinatown... *[whispers]* don't put the name of the restaurant in the article, though. But this restaurant has booths with curtains you can close, and you can press this buzzer, this little bell to have the waiter come and bring your food when you're ready. When the food came, I was on top of the table and we were like shooting in the booth. We were worried the whole time that the waiter might pop in. But *[giggles]* we had a lot of fun in there. And afterwards we went to one of those import stores in Chinatown. We went all the way down to the basement where they had the furniture and everything. There was hardly anybody there, so I could lift up my skirt and show my pussy throughout the whole store. There were just a few customers. We were very discrete when we were filming. Sean was carrying around the camera... it was so funny... *[whispers]* and there were people watching... **On the Road** was a lot of fun. Sean's a real likeable guy. He's so classy.

What about your first X-rated film?

It was for Rex Borsky and starred Nina Hartley. *Ha ha ha.* **Anal Annie's All-Girl Escort Service.** That

was my very first movie.

What was it like working with Nina?

Oh, she's a wonderful person. She's also a personal friend of mine. She's the one that actually got me started in the business.

Where did you first meet her?

At a swing party. It was at a mansion here in San Francisco above St. Francis Woods. A private club. They have parties there every third Saturday of the month. The house is still there, but the owners are gone. They sold the house. But I met Nina there. I didn't do a movie until eight years later, though. I was working as a nurse during that time.

Are you from the Bay Area?

I'm from Marin County. I was born in San Rafael. Then I moved over to Vallejo – military town. I went to school at San Francisco State, graduated and was a nurse for six years over at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley.

Do you still live in Marin County?

No. I live more towards Marina Del Rey now. I was living in Hollywood for a while... didn't like Hollywood. I wanted some fresh air instead of the smog... *[Fluttering her eyebrows, smiling coyly]* Do you want to know what my speciality is?

Please.

Double anal. *[Giggles]* Two guys... in the butthole. Actually there is a movie called **Double Butts**. It's produced by Sigma Cum Laude. *Ha ha ha*. It's a different kind of movie because that's with a post-op transsexual. And she had a real pussy. And you could actually put your dick in her pussy... *ha ha ha*... and fuck her. They took away the dick, you know? *Ha ha ha*. It's just a piece of skin that hangs down. Like a flap.

In what movies have you done double anal?

There was a double anal in **Bachelor Parties**. There's also a double anal in **Double Butts**.

What about your first anal experience? How old were you?

My first anal experience was... oh God, when I was like 24 years old. I was a late cummer in that, too. I remember it hurt sooooo bad. It was a bad experience. And then someone told me to just practice and stretch out my muscles with my fingers.



Blow Job Boulevard. © 1994, Sin City.

'Cause a lot of people aren't introduced to anal sex properly. They see it on the screen but they're not educated about it. You need to prepare your butt for anal sex. You just don't put the dick right in there for the first time because you could rip some muscles. All you have to do is gradually put a finger in and stretch it over to the side. And then keep adding fingers in and stretch it over to the side. Then finally, if you want to get into the fisting, you gotta keep practising till all your fingers are in there and then... twist it, you know, and it will even go... just relax your muscles and then just push your whole hand in when you relax... gradually.

And you've been practising this for a while?

A year. It takes a year. And then you're ready for the double anal. That's when you get two dildos up the butt, or two dicks, and one in the pussy. I can come from a double anal. I enjoy it.

Is it difficult to come when you're working with a large crew on a film?

No! That's even better because I'm an exhibitionist. Oh yeah. I really can get into it.

When you got the hang of fisting your ass, what happened? Did you see angels?

No, when I got the hang of it... actually, it was Dick Nasty who taught me how to do that. He has his own company now, too. He has a little bit bigger hand than mine. It's illegal to do it on video here.

How many films do you average per month? Per

week for that matter?

It depends on how much work there is. I can do, three, four movies a week. You can do maybe five movies a month. It just depends. You could go up to 10 movies a month if you really want to swing it.

You obviously like DPs.

Those are great too. I've done 'em with... so many guys. God, there was Ron Jeremy, Peter North, T.T. Boy, Marc Wallace... those are some of the major ones.

And gang bangs.

A lotta gang bangs. For John T. Bone, Harry Horndog.

Boiler plate question: What's your favourite position?

I like doggie. I like pile driver, that's when you lay down and your legs are over your head. It goes in deeper, there's more of a thrust. Like when a girl puts her legs over your shoulders and your dick goes in deeper. You want to know what the craziest thing I've ever done is?

Sure.

I was at a bachelor party for Zane. At one of their bachelor parties, they had two Dobies and they kept them up on the stairs. You know, the Dobies were watching everything. And so, right in the middle of my whipped cream act, one of the doggies came down and approached me. And I said to the owner, 'Now, this dog is not gonna come near me, is he?' And he goes, 'I'll give you a couple hundred bucks if you let it lick your pussy.' And I go, 'Are you sure?' And he goes, 'Oh, he loves whipped cream.' So the Dobie came up, and my legs are spread apart, and the Dobie went for it. And afterwards they asked, 'Well, how does it feel with a Dobie licking your pussy?' I go, 'Well, it's not like a cat because it's not like sandpaper. But still it was a little bit coarse. But... it did feel good.' *Ha ha ha.*

The dog wasn't complaining either, I'm sure.

Oh! I gotta tell you what happened after that. The dog that licked my pussy went upstairs where the other Dobie was and started humping the other dog.

Did they get that on film? – the Dobie licking your pussy?

Yeah. They were filming it. *Ha ha ha.* They took the video cam and shot it.



What would be dependent on your staying in the business?

Right now I'm doing a little bit of both – in front of the camera and production. I've produced three movies. **Casting Call**, I think VCA put that out. And Joy's **Lucky Club**. And **Miss Fix It**.

When you produce a film, what exactly is involved?

A lot of work. You've got to get the talents together, juggle around the budget – how much are you going to pay talent? How much are you going to pay crew? You've got to make sure there's back ups when talents don't show up on set. You have to get the PA's. It's basically a lot of technical things.

What's the best and the worse part about producing?

It's a lot of work... calling people up. You've got to keep calling everybody to make sure that they make it there on time. Talent not showing up. First you've got to read the script so you can match the talent for that particular character. You've got to analyse the script. You've got to figure out how much you're going to pay the talent, how much your overhead is going to be. It's a lot of work. But the best part is the end product. The result of all the editing.

Do you feel scripts are necessary in porn?

Let me tell you what happens. There's a basic script and everyone goes through it. There's always a change in dialogue and that's a pain in the butt. A lot of times it's better for the talent to read the scripts and for you to ask them, 'Well, do you feel comfortable with this?' We want them to be themselves. That's another thing – they have to pick up the script about a day or two before if it's a big production. There's a lot of time involved in it. And time is money, especially if you're shooting on location. You don't want to have talent waste a lot of time coming late, not knowing what their lines are.

Do you see yourself going more in that direction than performing in front of the camera?

Yes. I'm doing a lot more of that. I co-produced and directed and starred in all three of my movies. That took a lotta work. It was like around the clock.

Have you done much location shooting?

For **Miss Fix It** we used a Malibu ranch.

And you have to rent it, of course.

Oh yeah. That's money right there. You're talking about anywhere from \$100 an hour to \$1,000 a day. There's a lot of laundry costs involved. And generators. Generators – we're talking about big generators to run the lights. When you're on location, there are certain spots that are pitch dark and you've got to have generators on. Especially in the mountains. And then Malibu gets foggy at certain times. You're working with Mother Nature so it's harder to shoot on location than in a studio. In the middle of the day you get that strong brightness.

Do you have your own company?

No. I work for other companies now. Eventually I'd like to have my own company. It depends. It takes time and money.

One of your favourite films so far?

Of allllllllll my films... well, my parents know that I'm doing this. *Ha ha ha.*

How do they feel about it?

They are pretty open about it. I was shocked. Actually my cousin, she took home a tape to my mom and she said, 'You gotta watch this movie.' She didn't say it was me, though. She goes, 'We're gonna watch a porn movie.' She puts in this video tape and it was *me*. I don't know, it was probably one of my gang bang tapes, right? And so my mom calls me up on my pager and, when I call her back, she starts talking in her own language – Tagalog. And then I'm going, 'Oh God, I'm so embarrassed.' And she wasn't mad. She wanted to see more movies, you know.

What about your fan club?

Oh yeah! My fan club. You can write to Cumisha Amado Fan Club, PO Box 46608, Los Angeles, CA 90046-0608, USA. And I do bachelor parties, too.

Anything you want to add?

Just write me. But, also, I love to cook. And I play

the piano. I do concerts for Julliard... I used to teach piano. And I love to give great back massages.

I'm sure you gave a lot of those as a nurse. For six years you said...

OBGYN's my speciality. And my mom's also a doctor.

Hospitals are really erotic places. Did you ever...?

Have I ever done anything in a hospital? In the physical therapy room, in the Jacuzzi, of course. *Ha ha ha.*

Doctors? Patients?

Doctors. *Ha ha ha.* You know, doctor-nurse types of things. Or the doctor's lounge. During the after hours.

Never in the OR?

In the operating room? No, but we've done it in the morgue down below. *Ha ha ha.* But not with the patients down there. *Ha ha ha.* No. I don't want no formaldehyde. I remember those days in Anatomy. I remember during this one class in college we had a break. And so they took out their brown bags from the refrigerator, and they found a frozen dick in there. *Ha ha ha.*

LANA SANDS What did you do with it, Cumisha? Did you suck it? *Ha ha ha.*

CUMISHA No way! Threw it out. Who wants a dicksickle? Another Bobbitt case. *Ha ha ha.*

Thanks to Nick Wilson (Sin City), Dizzy (Video Team), Joel Bross (Pretty Kitties), and Lana Sands.



Photo © Arno Keks

BILL AND TIM'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

AN EXPLORATION OF THE CULTURE OF ADDICTION

Andrew Darlington

"I can feel the heat closing in. . ."

NAKED LUNCH, the unfilmable novel that David Cronenberg filmed, is one long sense-scrambling howl of heroin withdrawal, obscenity and macabre madness. William Burroughs' black ceremony of dense prose was pieced together in Tangiers, first published by the porn imprint Olympia Press in Paris in July 1959, and has inoculated junk culture ever since. Burroughs legitimises addiction. Burroughs intellectualises drug dependency. Transfigures the fix and the cold cellular craving that precedes it into the Twentieth Century's last great adventure. He injects seedy splendour into a squalor that's passed down like a 'contact high' to imitators.

"I found a silver needle/I put it into my arm/it did some good, did some harm/but the night was cold/and it almost kept me warm." Leonard Cohen uses the tacky glamour of junk. Lou Reed closes "in on death" as "the smack begins to flow" in Rock's most celebrated hymn to 'Heroin'. And Jesus and Mary Chain's 'Some Candy Talking' squats in an identical subterranean milieu of fine white powder and the ache of unfulfilled need...

High profile users and substance abusers? We name the guilty men.

To Burroughs, junk dependency and its supply is metaphor for control, alienation, power, frightful poetry and visions of truth. A viral infection only partially trapped in print, and impossible to visualise on celluloid. Only Cronenberg – in the wake of his diseased mutational reinterpretation of SF shocker **The Fly**, could get close, and he's had to fabricate a narrative from Burroughs' life outside the monstrous surrealism of the novel to do it. The movie draws back from the typewritten sheet to see the man sitting at his typewriter. It adds emotional dimensions that do not exist in the book. It creates a 'literary high'.

But Burroughs is just one writer who has used narcotics as a creative trigger. He's a thinner whiter duke from a pantheon of Heroic Dope Fiends. While Burroughs was pseudonymously publishing his first book, **Junkie** (as William Lee in 1953), Aldous Huxley was experimenting with hallucinogenics in California. "Thus it came about that, one bright May morning, I swallowed four-tenths of a gramme of mescaline dissolved in half a glass of water and sat down to wait for the results..." 'Animal' Huxley, later credited as an influence on the liner notes of the Mother of Invention's **Freak Out** album, sucks various elements of Zen into the druggy mélange to explain its effects.

Graduating to LSD he links seamlessly with psychedelic hit-man Timothy Leary's day-glo crusade to turn on, tune in and drop out America. Huxley's **The Doors of Perception** (1954) both arrows forward to Jim Morrison's deliberate appropriation of its title, and back to visionary William Blake from whom Huxley lifted the quote in the first place – "if the doors of perception were cleansed/everything will appear to man as it is, infinite." Huxley's name was dropped as regularly as acid. Like Burroughs, like Leary, he legitimises drug use. Gives it intellectual credibility.

Doing drugs, they say, is not just a good groove, not just a recreational high – nothing as trivial or inconsequential – it is spiritual quest. It is cerebral odyssey out beyond the rippling rim of eternity, then back down through the grey room of the brain and into the DNA helix and the fractal hum of sub-atomic particles. It is seeing God through the ululation of energies in a sunflower or the susurrations of sounds in the timeless improvisations of the Grateful Dead's 'Dark Star'.

But, hey kids! Don't try this one at home!

Heroin. Mescaline. Lysergic Acid Diethylamide. Cannabis. Cocaine. Marijuana. Peyote. Opium. MDMA. Ecstasy. Crack. Hashish. Speed. Kif. Pot.

Grass. Ganja. Tobacco. Uppers. Downers. Purple Hearts.

Before Huxley there is 'Bird'. Altoist Charlie Parker, like jazz musicians before and since, uses Benzedrine from early – to stay awake, to concentrate for long stretches of time, for jags of artificial energy. But he also gets high on whatever is available. Nutmeg, taken with coffee or floated on top of an orange soda, produces spectacular highs but rips the stomach lining raw. From age 16 he's buying "sticks of shit" (marijuana) for a dozen a dollar, and he's already snorted cocaine. By 21 – and 1941 – he's on New York's front line, establishing the legendary pattern of his frenetic improvisational genius. Creating Bebop in the heavy-gravity forcing house of heroin addiction. "Holy the groaning saxophone! Holy the bop apocalypse!" Howls Beat Poet Allen Ginsberg, "Holy the jazzbands marijuana hipsters peace & junk & drums!"

The equation is beguiling. Heroin destroys Bird, but in the process it ignites supernatural levels of creativity. Detonates complex harmonic changes, an oblique and elastic relationship with the beat, chromatic excursions; a hard edged passion run ragged through megatechnical levels of dexterity. But Parker's habit is merely writing huge what's been there from Storyville's first honk: dope was always part of Jazz culture, floating up the Mississippi on the same riverboats that took Dixieland north.

Every immaculately stoned muso plays with Bird's ghost in his head. Hunting the same San Andreas Faultline he straddles.

Like Lenny Bruce – "I'll die young, but it's like kissing God."

Before Bird there's Cocteau, Rimbaud, Coleridge, Shelley, Baudelaire. And there's Thomas de Quincey's **Confessions of an English Opium Eater**, a cult book up and down drug subcultures since the Nineteenth Century. An apology and a celebration of the indulgence that births the poetry of dreams. Procol Harum and Frankie Goes To Hollywood later thefted the imagery, but Samuel Taylor Coleridge took laudanum – which is liquid opium – and out of its delirium he 'read' a wild and exotic poem flying a magic carpet ride of exquisite beauty. On coming down he began speed-writing as much of it as he could remember – "in Xanadu did Kubla Khan/a stately pleasure-dome decree" – before his manic scribbling was distracted by 'a person from Porlock' ... the rest was subsequently lost.

A systematic derangement of the senses produces great art. Produces Coleridge and Byron. Bird and Coltrane. Huxley and Burroughs.

I first get high in Barnsley, Yorkshire, edging sideways into underground journalism as the Sixties decays into the Seventies. The ritual is mesmerising. Fashioning a pipe from crinkly tinfoil. A camelshit pearl of cannabis resin. The first faint whisp of its



Thomas De Quincey, *The Opium Eater*

breath. There was never any question of questions. I'd been too well primed by gurus of the cellular frontier. I was embarrassingly eager to imitate Bill (Burroughs) and Tim (Leary's) Excellent Adventures. I'd been well-suckered by the product endorsement of other celebrity users too: the wacky exploits of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters in Tom Wolfe's **The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test**, Ed Sanders' hymn to 'Marijuana' on the Fugs LP **It Crawled Into My Hand, Honest**, Allen Ginsberg, Captain Beefheart's 'Ah Feel Like Ahcid', **Dharma Bums** novelist Jack Kerouac, Michael McClure, and the rest. I'd read Jean Cocteau's claim that an opium addict "who inhales 12 pipes a day all his life will not only be fortified against influenza, colds and sore throats, but will also be far less in danger than a man who drinks a glass of brandy or who smokes four cigars. I know people who have smoked one, two, three, seven, up to 12 pipes a day for 40 years". In **Junkie**, Burroughs makes even more fantastic recommendations for heroin: "junk is a cellular equation that teaches the user facts of general validity. I have learned a great deal from using junk." It can even, bizarrely, lead to longevity: "when you stop growing you start dying. An addict never stops growing!"

Inevitably I dropped acid a little later. Although perhaps I had too many psychic ghosts to benefit from its full cosmic beneficence, too much of a tendency to fight its effect and retain control rather than going with the flow. In flashback I'm on my way to the ramshackle **Styng** office, the sun up and the tarmac melting beneath my Beat sandals. Beyond the staircase the door is locked fast – indicating that some kind of illicit indulgence is in progress. So in high humour I start pummelling the poster-splashed door, yelling, "OPEN UP, IT'S A BUST! IT'S THE PIGS!!!" The door imploding to show two constables already within, smoking joints rather self-consciously,

squatting like Cheech & Chong guesting in a frame from a Furry Freak Brothers strip.

I've never particularly sought it out since, but it's always been there. Touring and performing, writing and interacting, it's seldom been difficult to find. There are even friends who tape small sachets of intriguing white powder to their letterheads. But despite it all, there are certain skills I've never managed to acquire. Like rolling an acceptable joint. After I'd read at a festival, back home with the stylishly deranged organiser in his bohemian squat, a gilded dung-heap crawling with naked kids and feral cats, he leaves me with the "stuff" to roll up while he gets the wine. I'm critically watched by a sneering 10-year-old brat as I fumble. At the inept completion of my efforts the absolute derision of her "you call THAT a joint!" still chills me. She then takes over to demonstrate the correct technique.

In his **Opium**, written in 1929, poet movie-maker and artist Jean Cocteau observes that "everything one does in life, even love, occurs in the express train racing towards death. To smoke opium is to get out of the train while it is still moving".

Escape is a powerful motivation. Escape from the mundane. From boredom. From meaninglessness. Drugs are an adventure when no other adventures remain possible. Previous generations had Passchendaele, the Blitz. We have acid, heroin, solvent inhalation. Every reformed user selling their confessions to the tabloids – 'MY DECENT INTO DRUGS HELL' – have a story to tell, a heroic struggle with demons of the soul. A flirtation with danger. Closing in on death. Narcotics from an exotic fantasy world, an alternative reality parallel with, but separate from, normality. A secret society with its own rules and behaviour patterns.

The dope subculture is a continuity. To Allen Ginsberg it walks "with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares".

Liverpool horror writer, Ramsey Campbell, catches the drugs demimonde with an experienced eye, from the dooper no-hoper conversations to the compulsive cross-city quests for fresh blow, the lethargy, and that stage where your whole life revolves around the point of scoring. "I had a whirl there," he tells me. His story, 'Missing' (in **The Height of the Scream**), opens with graphically depicted dope-smoking. 'I was watching the skin of the joint roll back from the glowing glans as I inhaled; my head sailed back; I heard the glittering flutter of a bird outside the window.' He tells me about the deliberate ceremonies of scoring – "they sit down and say just four lines, and roll a joint, and it all takes 10 minutes. I remember that well. There was this terrible ritual about having to go in there and sit for a couple of hours while people brought out vegetarian cookies, and you couldn't actually say 'Well, have you got any?', because there had to be the ritual of everybody rolling up first, until somebody would get up very s-l-

o-w-l-y and say, 'OK man, c'mon we'll weigh it out on the scales.'"

The gutter romance of scoring is well documented in Rock. From the Small Faces' 'Here Comes The Nice' ("He knows what I want/he's got what I need/ he's always there, when I need some speed"), through Lou Reed ("26 dollars in my hand/up to Lexington 125/I feel sick and dirty/more dead than alive") and into Jesus and Mary Chain ("I'm going down to the place tonight/to see if I can get a taste tonight/a taste of something warm and sweet/that shivers your bones and rises to your heat"). In on the scam, Jeff Nuttall explains, in **Bomb Culture**, that "it takes a quick and sophisticated eye to detect the over-confident speech and movement of heroin and methedrine users. It takes an experienced eye to identify the benign dreaminess of potsmokers or the blinks and grinding teeth of amphetamine and cocaine users. But LSD is the drug of visual dreams and visual experiences and advertises itself immediately."

LSD is the Holy Grail of drugs, the Philosopher's Stone that turns base metal lives into gold. A form of chemically synthesised mescaline, it is an anabolic steroids for the brain cells.

As Leary points out, life is a process of cycling various substances through your body which alter or affect behaviour, mood or metabolism. Food is ingested or excreted, air inhaled and exhaled. Exact separation of the inner from the outer world does not exist. The body is a processing unit acting and reacting on what it extracts from its environment. You are what you eat? John Major hasn't yet been seen eating slimy toads, but surely it's only a matter of time. And further – the body and brain are already



controlled by an internal biochemical balance of adrenaline, endocrine, hormonal and other glandular secretions. That equilibrium is constantly nudged in random and unconscious ways. Drugs are merely a more precise and more potent tool for effecting and fine-tuning change. Aldus Huxley calls the brain "a reducing valve" designed to filter out the overwhelming torrent of inputted information received by the senses. It reduces the flow down to the trickle of data necessary for day-to-day survival. Mind-altering substances provide the way for spiritual sleuths to "cleanse the doors of perception". A way to break on through to the other side and touch a more real reality... according to Leary. Hallucinogenic substances often carries with it tantalising whispers of great perceived truths that evaporate with a return to normal awareness. Oceanic feelings of oneness with the multiverse.

Enjoy this trip, and it is a trip, and it is a trip...

All societies that have ever existed in the world have sanctioned some form of consciousness-altering devices – from alcohol to peyote, from hashish to aeroplane glue, from caffeine to opium. Just because the drugs that killed Elvis Presley were legally (if over-) prescribed doesn't mean that they killed him any less dead. The first colonists on Mars will begin fermenting locally grown lichen and separating it out into various grades like connoisseurs. And hey! Take a hit offa that Venusian grokk-weed! Man, is *that* heavy shit!

But beyond the feel-good factor, all religions are based in, or utilise narcotic-like perceptions; fasting and flagellation are merely ways of inducing organic highs. Central American religions were grounded around mescaline visions. It has been suggested (in **The Sacred Mushroom And The Cross**) that Judeo-Christian myths are the result of an over-indulgence in psychedelic fungi native to the Levant. Leary – a former Director of Psychological Research in Oakland University – got tripped out by the spiritual potential of early lysergic acid. Like Huxley before him, he saw the chemical apocalypse in his head as a philosophical tool, a way of inducing instant trance states of meditation, an evolutionary route to new modes of perception and wisdoms. His **The Politics of Ecstasy** became a crash-pad handbook for mind voyagers. Busted and jailed, escaping into exile, he became High Priest of the hyped high. The Moody Blues wrote a song for him. The Who roared, "I asked Bobby Dylan, I asked the Beatles/I asked Timothy Leary..."; a paean to the poet of the interior odyssey, the most visible missionary for New Age acid. To Leary, LSD is a "sacramental ritual" which not only reveals the face of God, but takes you beyond that to the shamanistic mystic impulse that lies behind the fabrication of all gods. It not only reveals the solar systems in the dirt beneath your finger-nails and the universes in a grain of sand, but confirms the latest advances in particle physics too,

the dance of quantum cats in the most infinitesimal loops of the quark.

All matter is ultimately energy, and cosmic energy is the intercourse of the gods. Says Leary. The drug is Love – and Love is the drug. "Alcohol turns off the brightness, methadrine jiggles and speeds up the image," he writes, "LSD flips on 87 channels at once, pot adds colour, meditations, mantras, prayer, mudras sharpen the focus. It's your head, baby, and it's two billion years old."

But is drugged perception real or more profound than straight vision? Or just the confused interplay of sensations inside the skull, decipherable only to another Day Tripper?

After such excesses the come-down had to be hard. No gain without pain. Hear John Lennon's tortured withdrawal from heroin addiction on the Plastic Ono Band's 'Cold Turkey'. Check out the functioning brain-cells of acid casualties. Where are Syd Barrett and Peter Green now? Check out the other side of acid with Charles Manson's dune-buggy death squadron.

Jack Kerouac once wrote about smoking the "most perfect of all blackhaired seeded tight superbomber joints in the world". Poet Philip Lamantia gives him peyote promising "Technicolor visions", instead he has a powerful revelation of how it feels to die. In January 1961 Leary persuades Kerouac to try LSD, but he has a bad trip, fighting paranoid attacks. He emerges from the experience convinced LSD is a Soviet subversion plot to infiltrate and destroy the moral fibre of America. Huxley, who dies in 1963 – the same day as Kennedy's assassination and a month after Cocteau's death – had invented the fictional benign drug 'moksha' (in his novel **Island**). But he also predicted 'soma', a narcotic instrument of dystopic State Control (in **Brave New World**).

From ecstasy bridge with the rainbow apocalypse rising, Timothy Leary's ticket exploded.

Ramsey Campbell tells me, "I certainly got into psychedelics in a relatively small way, then I precipitated myself in a flashback in the late-Seventies ("... I spent a night trying not to see things such as my face becoming mouthless in the bathroom mirror...") and that was me done with it, as far as LSD was concerned. It was fun, but it was a phase one went through. But then the culture turned to harder, and to my mind, considerably nastier drugs. We're going into heavier drugs now. I'm not personally, God forbid, part of it."

With eloquent regret poet Dave Cunliffe tells me, "It's been impossible to get good acid since Operation Julie" – referring to the massive police action that smashed co-ordinated LSD production in the north of England. Even Leary, re-emerging from jail, redirects his megabyte proselytising to the safer arena of the electronics revolution. Punk arrived to smash the last vestiges of the hippie dream. Its preference is for harder, more violent drugs,

amphetamine, speed, sulphates. **Sid and Nancy** take it into the terminal zone. All their love in vein.

In its wake, the biomorphic horror, cold eyes and thin lips of William Burroughs re-emerge as newer ciphers for drabber, more cynical days. His sado-erotic collages, cut-ups and metaphors are exactly attuned to the Electro-Industrial underground of the early Eighties. Cabaret Voltaire. Throbbing Gristle. Clock DVA. The new downers of infected needles and virulent viral plague.

"I need all that stuff, give me some of that stuff, I want some candy, I want candy, I want stuff..." Jesus and Mary Chain against discordant drones of whining feedback.

Each milieu, each demimonde, each subculture has its drug that both creates and matches its own essential vibe. From cocaine all the way down to solvent abuse. From **Sniffin' Glue** to **Totally Wired**. From Coleridge to tales of contemporary madness. Bret Easton Ellis' Blank Generation novel, **Less Than Zero**. Julia Phillips' **You'll Never Eat Lunch In This Town Again**, a real life horror trip by the co-producer of movies like **The Sting** and **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, her talent destroyed by her habit.

The Manchester Rave scene coincides with newly formulated strains of acid so prevalent they say the pass-grades for Manchester University are now just two straight E's.

Smak are a cult Yorkshire band. Their much in-

demand adrenaline Funk white-label 12" 'Feel The Heat' lifts its title from the opening line of **Naked Lunch**. Yet despite massive potential, major labels fight shy of signing a band with such confrontational reference points. "Perhaps we should choose a different group name," suggests saxist Kevin Roberts wryly. "Perhaps we should become The E's?"

When the smack begins to flow...

"I can feel the heat closing in..."

Naked Lunch, the unfilmable novel that David Cronenberg filmed, has Burroughs' alter ego William Lee played by Peter Weller. Encased in steel and cybernetics Weller's previous role was as **Robocop**. It's not an inappropriate progression. The text is a wasteland of alienation seen in snatched glimpses of the Beat Generation's sophisticated louts eaten up by their addictions, genetic, homo-erotic, and narcotic. Burroughs' wrote **Naked Lunch** while living in one room in the Native Quarter of Tangiers during withdrawal from 15 years of addiction, "at the end of the junk line." "The needle is not important," he writes, "whether you sniff it smoke it eat it or shove it up your ass the result is the same: addiction." He admits to "no precise memory" of writing the endless fragmentary notes that become the novel. "I had not taken a bath in a year nor changed my clothes or removed them except to stick a needle every hour in the fibrous grey wooden flesh of terminal addiction. I never cleaned or dusted the room. Empty ampoule boxes and garbage piled up to the ceiling." Allen Ginsberg collects and edits the manuscript. Jack Kerouac types up vast tracts of its delirium - a fast typer, 200 words a minute. He also names the novel that results, the key work of Twentieth Century drug literature. Its fractured disgust and weird terrors from a stomach-spasming descent into a junk-sick hell. But Burroughs is, above all, an unrepentant celebrity user: "I was on the junk in New York. I know 10 different ways of getting a pill into my mouth under closed-circuit TV." ('Ali's Smile' from **Exterminator**.)

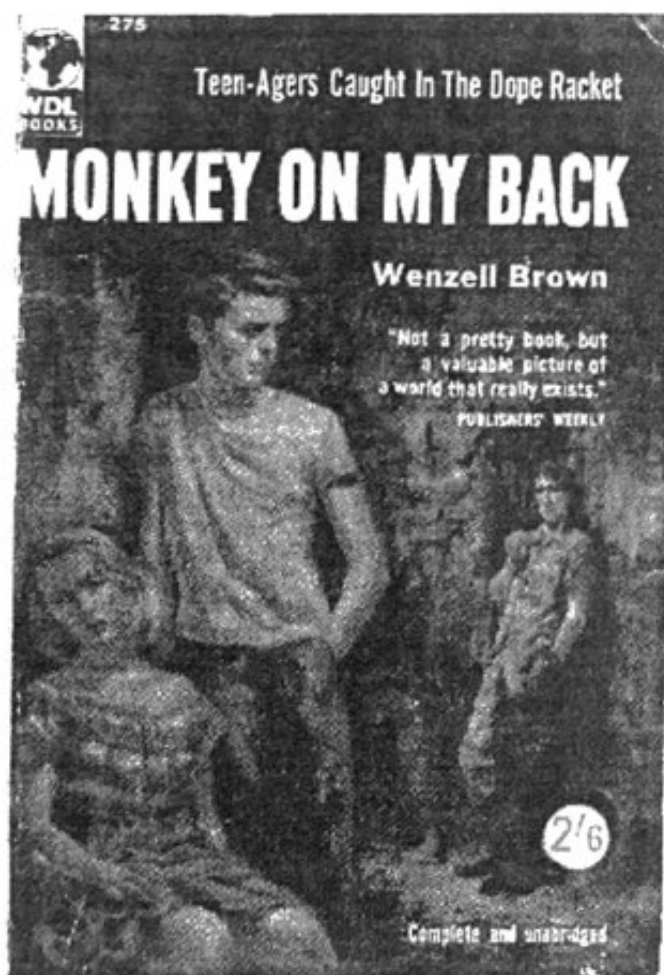
High profile users and substance abusers? We've named the guilty men.

"Is it true that the great majority of heroin addicts start with marijuana," asks Richard Neville in **Playpower**.

"Yes," he answers. "Even more of them begin with milk."

Rock has taken drugs product endorsement into the AM/FM medium of three-minute public relations commercials for tripping. While a pantheon of Heroic Literary Dope Fiends legitimise and intellectualise it all. Against such a cultural continuity of hype, what price a Government ad that goes, 'HEROIN SCREWS YOU UP' or 'JUST SAY NO'?

Enjoy this trip, and it is a trip, and it is a trip...



Bi and Bi

polymorphous perversity and beyond

Andy Plumb

The hangman had a glint in his eyes that I couldn't resist. As he placed a noose over my head, and began to slowly tighten it around my neck, I whispered, "I love you." He smiled a crooked smile and went about his business: the business of taking a person's breath away, one might say, not a bad job if you can get it. I thought to myself just as the bottom fell out from under me and the dangling began. And boy did this girl dangle, deliriously, delightfully, without a care in the world, blood rushing throughout my body, especially into my prick, which was hung with the best of me, aiming at that hangman with the glint in his eyes...

'The Last Seduction'
Selena Anne Shephard

Every few years I get this compulsion to redefine my sexuality; to come up with an identity to play with until it bores me, turns into a self-cliché, or I metamorphosize into something different. I've been a bisexual-transvestite, quadrisexual, male lesbian, an androgyne, a "Don't Label Me" post-modern sexual being and, though I wonder about the connotations of "polymorphous perversity", it may be as apt a description of my sexuality as I've ever taken on.

Last night, as I madly switched television channels from 2 to 36 and back to 2 again, I came to the realisations that as of my 37th birthday, August 31, 1988, I'm a Bi-Bi Sexual (which doesn't mean I'm saying bye-bye to sex, though my few and far between erotic experiences beyond self-pleasuring the past three years might lead one to that conclusion). Let me explain. You see, in my "normal", day-to-day presentation of my self to the outside world, I'm Andy, a youthful-looking male who is

attracted to and has played passionately with men and women, but through the looking glass dwells my persona/feminine entity/Anima (I named her Selena Anne about seven years ago), who has also enjoyed erotic pleasure with members of both genders of the human species (on occasion, the men are also playing out their feminine fantasies).

I was nine years old when SHE came into my life. I have no recollection of ever consciously asking for her; she just appeared, in the guise of a silky slip. The moment I first dropped the compelling garment over my head, letting it slide down my pre-pubescent body, I was awakened to an intoxicating world of senses that I had been unaware of previously. While dressed in my mother's or sister's clothes, I was able to temporarily transcend what I considered to



Selena Anne Shephard. All photos © Andy Plumb

be the difficult, frustrating trials and tribulations of boyhood: the fights over whether I was safe or out, the hiding of my tears from my friends, the continual striving to be the best math student or fastest runner or class clown. Much to my displeasure, after orgasm, my feelings of ecstasy would be overtaken by paranoia, guilt, and extreme loneliness.

Despite the seemingly miraculous powers of fashions deemed "for women only", I had few longings to leap from my birth given male gender to female. I think that if I had had my druthers, if some superpower could have granted my wish, I would have chosen to live happily as a baseball-hurling, panty-clad, outside-the-boundaries-of-the-either/or,

boy/girl (that still sounds nice). But given the extreme gender stereotyping and trapping that dominated life in mid-Twentieth Century America, I had little faith that my idealistic dreams would ever be realised.

I had my first boy-to-boy sexual experience with Michael (all names of sexual partners have been changed), who lived across the street. I am still able to conjure up images of him stroking my turned-on penis while singing Beatles songs ('I Want To Hold Your Hand', 'When I Saw Her Standing There', etc.). I couldn't get enough of his attention, and was very upset when his family took his hand out of my life by moving out of the area. Luckily, I found a couple of other friends to go around with. Charles, the very "straight and narrow" boy next door, pulled a nice surprise one sleep-over evening by climbing on top of me and simulating intercourse. On another night together, I got real brave and shared my secret world with him. Not only wasn't he bothered but he joined me in the wearing of frilly panties, bras, stockings, and other pieces of feminine finery (I have the sneaking suspicion that he now wears his wife's undergarments beneath his corporate uniform). One other friend and I did the trans-genddance a couple of times, but that period of innocent exploration had to come to end, alas.

During my Freshman year of high school, I found myself desperately yearning for a capital G, Girlfriend, (someone to kiss behind the Ferris wheel of the local Walnut Festival), while trying to deny any interest in boys, fearful I might get labelled "queer". Despite my desires, I was so shy with girls that I did not even go on a date until I was a senior, and even then I didn't have the nerve to kiss any of them good night. Consequently, Selena Anne and I became more and more intimate during my high school days. We were an intense on-again, off-again couple (I loved her, I hated her, she could take me to the heavens and then down to hell within the course of an hour or two).

When I went away to college, instead of diving into the "sexual revolution" (late Sixties), I retreated further into myself, unsure of where to go, or what I wanted to be. I would occasionally have fantasies of men exciting me in ways that my childhood playmates had done (I was fairly certain that gay sex was not just a phase I had gone through), but these were rudely expelled from my mind when a rather stoned man mistook my 19-year-old friendliness for a sexual come-on. It took me years to get over the frightening



image of his clammy hands grabbing my throat.

If I didn't have my Selena Anne persona to transform into, I'm not sure I would have ever been able to express my Andy-self with a male. She provided a buffer, a pretence of heterosexuality. When in drag, I knew I wasn't the real thing (a genuine gal) but I made a damn good facsimile, and found it a lark to be exploring the "forbidden territory" outside the gender lines with another person (most of the men I've been with while I was dressed up in women's clothes would identify themselves as "straight", despite evidence to the contrary).

In relating to genuine women, I lacked confidence to the tenth degree (I would aim for massage parlours when I could no longer hold back my horniness). At the age of 23, I finally found the GIRLFRIEND I'd been madly desiring for a decade. I went from a singular identity to "Andy and Nancy" almost overnight. We spent every moment together (or so it seemed), usually in bed, trying out Kama Sutra positions 1 through 27. I put Selena in my dorm closet, not knowing how Nancy would react to this aspect of me. Just at the point when I felt ready to open up to Nancy, she said "sayonara", which made the break-up even more difficult to deal with.

When my second lover, Alaina, accidentally came across a drawer full of black corsets, garter belts, and other clues to my wildside, I expected her

to leave me in an instant, but instead she was intrigued by Selena – more so than she was by my Andy persona. For the next few months we played dress-up (as a tomboy, she had avoided girlish clothes in earlier days) and explored alternative sexual fantasy/reality. Selena and I were thrilled to finally be playing with a flesh and blood woman; it was almost as much fun as the scintillating scenes that reeled through my mind. If only Alaina and I had gelled in other ways; If only, if only...

A few years later I got involved with Elly, a young, artistic woman who had become enamoured by a punkish Selena (clad in black fishnets and a red vinyl miniskirt) at a Halloween party. For nearly a year, we lustily performed the trans-genddance (we tried heterosexual, naked male body next to naked female body, sex a few times, but it was unsatisfying to both of us), taking it into realms that went beyond my wildest imaginings. Elly liked to take on a more masculine/dominant role that was mind-boggling, scary, and exciting at the same time. We also engaged in a few *ménage-à-trois* with members of either/or gender. Eventually, Elly's passion for Selena waned (I wanted to take us even further into



forbidden territory) and she ran off with a real woman in San Francisco. It seems that playing girl with Selena was a stepping stone to lesbianism, which Elly now wholeheartedly embraces.

In the past four and a half years, I have had a few short-term affairs with women (two of whom enjoyed playing with Selena, while one wanted her to remain in the closet), and assorted safe sex experiences with men (usually as Selena, occasionally as Andy), but mostly it's the two of me frolicking behind closed doors. I've come to accept, appreciate, understand,

and love my feminine entity in her many personifications, more often than not, which is a great improvement from earlier times. I've found myself playing "girl" on days when I wake up singing, "oh, what a beautiful morning", and on my "to be or not to be" days.

Now that Selena Anne and I are ON much of the time, I expend a lot less time and energy "a-wishing and a-hoping" for Mr or Ms Right As One Can Find These Days. And if someone extra-special does happen to come along, I will insist that he or she (or s/he) not just accept my bi-bi-sexuality, but will revel in it.

On one level, I'm aware that Selena's only a closetful of clothes, just a material girl at best, a stereotypical female being without substance. On the other hand, rolling on a pair of black lace stockings, draping myself in a satin slip, and stepping into four inch spiked heels rips apart the masculine straitjacket that usually engulfs me; I feel an energy, a vibrancy, a sense of self that I've never experienced encased in a three-piece suit or in Levi blues and a T-shirt. Ironically, I oftentimes feel more powerful when I am impersonating a woman than when I am impersonating a man. I do not believe I am feasting on negative images of women (which some feminists have said of transvestism) but that I am working/playing towards the end of gender fascism. It really all comes around to: Who should be the boss, you or your gender?

As I said at the beginning, every three or four years I feel compelled to redefine my sexuality. Well, that times has come around again; it's out with *Bi and Bi Sexuality*, and in with, I'm not quite sure what. Since the naming of my current sexuality eludes me (which has a lot to do with being in metamorphosis), what I can say about it is that it's more powerful, more intense, more exhilarating than any of my previous ones. There's a heightened awareness within me, a swirling creativity; I no longer shackle my imagination for either societal correct or politically correct reasons. My gender "thing" has both simplified and become more complex (the former makes it easier to *fully* accept my selves and the latter makes life more interesting, knowing that there is always more to the picture than meets the eye). I dive into my fetishes with all my passion and discover they have healing powers ("a slicker a day keeps the doctor away"). And I've learned to play around with dominance and submission, doing it with partners (of whichever gender; I still am inclusive rather than exclusive) who don't take it all that seriously and share my irreverent attitude (?) towards many of the *rules and regulations* ("who's on top, who's on the bottom, I don't know, let's play it by ear and see where we end up")...

A different version of the above appeared in *Taste Of Latex*, 1991.

DISMEMBERMENT AND DISPLAY

Mikita Hoy

In a society where "copycat" killings by a teenaged admirer of Mickey and Mallory gained almost as much press coverage as **NATURAL BORN KILLERS** itself, and where the O.J. Simpson soap circus had a regular Sunday night slot on BBC2, no one is really much concerned any more about the existence (or otherwise) of that apocryphal old chestnut, the snuff movie. As any discerning viewer in search of "live" deaths will tell you, the underground horror market is the last place to look for death films.

If original mondo films from the 1960s and Seventies prove difficult to get hold of, they have their contemporary equivalent in the **Death Scenes** series, or **Faces of Death**, or pseudo-shockumentaries like **The Killing of America** or **The End**. Videos containing a hand-picked selection of news footage – vehicle crashes, natural disasters, tragedies of war, scenes from concentration camps – are available in all good High Street video shops. Even more popular of late are 'real' police videos of car chases, stakeouts, street shootings and dawn raids, a fashionable variant of the perennially popular 'true crime' video like the 'Mobsters, Murderers and



Madmen' series.

Users and critics of pornography have amply testified how the simulated erotica of soft core is generally more effective, more arousing and certainly more cinematically visual than hard core's representation of 'real' couples engaged in actual intercourse. If Baudrillard is right in his claim that the boundaries between the real and the televisually represented have become so blurred that it is beside the point to distinguish between them, and if the represented can be so much more powerful than the real (as has been claimed about **Natural Born Killers**, **A Clockwork Orange**, **The Exorcist**, **Reservoir Dogs**), then why is it that this particular area of "reality" – the footage of 'real, live' on-screen death – should somehow retain its popularity, its power and its ability to shock in an arena full of such vivid and challenging fictional competitors?

The answer probably has something to do with what André Bazin has described as the unique power of the photographic image – its ability to present the actual object itself, freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. In other words, film footage of violent death is dedicated to capturing the visual evidence of the mechanical truth of bodily disintegration caught in involuntary spasm, the ultimate and uncontrollable confession of bodily collapse at the moment of death.

Just as the most explicit hardcore pornography reveals as much as possible of the labial area and vaginal opening (in the "split beaver" or "open box"

shot), so the most sought-after death films are those which show most visual evidence of the "real" opened body – spilt blood, brain, intestines or bodily fluid. This connection between pornography and the death film is quite significant: it is interesting to note that Freud linked the female genital organs to the *unheimlich*, the uncanny. Freud pointed out that neurotic men often declare they feel there is something uncanny about the female genital organs, whereas this *unheimlich* place is in fact the entrance to the former *heim* (home) of all human beings, to the place where each of us lived, once upon a time.

Others have argued that what creates the most fear and excitement is evidence of things *out of place*, things that defy categorisation. In the case of the video presentation of 'live' death, what is out of place is bodily control, witnessed most clearly by the collapse of bodily boundaries, and the external appearance of things that should properly be kept inside. Anything which protrudes from the body or leaves the body's confines is considered distasteful and grotesque, and this is partly why taboos have developed around bodily elimination like defecation, menstruation, urination, sweating, blowing the nose, sneezing and ejaculation. The series of anatomical images in the death film is essentially an obsessive reiteration of the human body *out of control*, and therefore – as in comedy – made ridiculous.

Films like **Death Scenes** and **Faces of Death** testify to a fundamental *disrespect* for death which is intrinsic in all these images of the contemporising and uncrowning of the human cadaver. Traditionally, this disrespect derives from the carnivalesque ridiculing of relics, which was common in mediaeval literature – especially Protestant satire – where the dismembered bodies of saints became an occasion for grotesque images and enumerations of various parts of the dismembered bodies. In the carnival of death cinema, the role of the holy relic is played by the dignified living human body, which is aped and travestied in an obsessive litany of bodily collapse.

Our current leisure pursuit of watching televised representations of violent death seems bizarre only until we consider the long tradition that exists in narrative and folklore of regeneration through violence. Our cultural obsession with violent death is related to general folkloric assumptions concerning the regenerative power of death and the fresh corpse, and the idea of healing the death of one by the death of another: death in folklore and oral literature has always been related to the birth of new life, fertility and growth. This is especially appropriate in relation to violent death: it has been argued that the final spasms of the death agony exactly repeat the first spasms of the organism in the act of being born.

The images presented to us by the death film are catalogues of nervous disorders and psychotic symptoms: the repressed complexes of traditional filmic narrative. In its terrifying carnivalisation of the



site of the body, the spasms of death, and of that moment where horror merges with the ridiculous, the death film – for those able to appreciate its progressive nature – bespeaks the ancient libidinal association between laughter and bloodshed.

PEOPLE WHO READ HEADPRESS



GREGORY DARK, porn auteur, stops work with the arrival on set of the latest **HEADPRESS**.

Photo © Anthony Petkovich

THE ROOF IS NOT PLYWOOD

THE FILMS OF MATTHEW S. SMITH

David Kerekes

Matthew Samuel Smith is a filmmaker working in Super-8 and, on occasion, video. His filmography opens in 1982 with *THE BUTCHER IS LOOSE*. Having seen several of his later pictures, it would be fair to suggest that the film is probably about a butcher. And he's loose. Together with the following year's *HONG KONG CONNECTIONS* – which concerns the trafficking of narcotics – here lies the basis of all subsequent M.S.S. pictures. Drugs and killers. Killers and drugs. (And Satanism.)

Operating from Florida, Smith oversees all aspects of his low-budget productions. With his brother, Johnny, working together as The Stardust Plantation, he co-produces the musical soundtracks. His cast are made up of friends and passer-by who, for the most part, make no pretence to be acting. The result is pretty bizarre. Not necessarily good, more on a different plane of consciousness. The same can be said of Matthew himself: attuned, as he so claims, to a metaphysical awareness. He also used to be a DJ in a nude dancing club, and got into trouble during the making of several of his pictures. More recently, Matthew kept this author in a temperate state of confusion with letters relating to how friends of his, living in Europe, were enthusing over his interview as it appeared in *Headpress*. Confusion because not only had the article yet to be appear, it wasn't even written. This then, courtesy of the dizzying spiral of time past and present, is 'The Roof Is Not Plywood' – the films of Matthew S. Smith.

SOMETIMES AT THE CHEROKEE SINK (1992)

A team of college students, led by Professor Fontaine, head off to investigate rumours of a monster thought to inhabit a freshwater sinkhole. From a trailer park, an aged couple spot something out in the water. They point and distractedly determine, "Let's get the hell out of here." Inside their trailer home they make a call to the Sheriff's office. "I'm at the Spring Creek trailer park – you ought to know where that is... it's where all the murders have been happening." We don't get to see what it might be that so spooked the couple. Later, the old man will sit at an electronic keyboard (the kind which produces its own 4/4 accompaniment) and hold down a solitary note. Lots of driving about

in a car. Pot growers and the Sheriff are involved in some conspiracy. A party goes on. Black magic takes place. On his boat, Professor Fontaine schedules "another late-night dive". He explains to his student divers that they are to go in search of an amphibious creature, a living fossil. "What the hell is he talking about?" queries one student. Elsewhere, in an office, a couple of kids attempt to get it on. "I smell bug spray," muses the girl. "I'll go check round back," determines the boy. He is, of course, murdered (by a guy in a skull-mask wielding a knife). Cut quickly to the student divers. They are in the water, screaming and reaching up for the boat, not quite able to make the professor's reach. Then they are dragged below the surface and out of sight. The professor cannot imagine what he might tell their parents. A group of kids smoke reefers and decide to go to the beach. Once there, they leave for some other place: a public swimming pool. The professor stalks the guy in a skull-mask and chops his head off. Law enforcement agents find the bodies of three more kids. The mystery is solved. (A post-credit outtake shows the director being hassled for filming at the swimming pool. People might not want to be filmed, an old guy declares. What's more, he adds, he's on the Board. What's that, one girl giggles, the surf board?)

BLOOD SUMMER (1993)

This picture starts with Shaun, a main character, mid-sentence, addressing the viewer. "–best friend Mike had an accident." Cut to a second take of the scene. "It all started when my best friend Mike cut his thumb off." The camera pulls around Shaun and peers into an adjoining room, a kitchen, where Mike has just chopped off his thumb. Shaun rushes in to

join Mike in the picture and take his buddy to hospital. Cut. Two girls, while laying on a bed, talk about "what happened last night". One of the girls touches the other girl's thigh. The other gives an embarrassed snigger. "Are you uncomfortable?" asks the first. "No," the second laughs, looking away from the camera and out the window. They kiss. Mike is out of hospital. With a swagger he turns up at his buddy Shaun's place. They go to the supermarket with Mike insisting all the while that friends wouldn't hurt each other. "Friends are friends, right?... Just like friends." A guy speaks into a cordless telephone. He is in the trailer park business. Shaun has a substantial plot of cannabis growing in his back garden. The bush is above head height. He explains to the viewer how an antennae he has erected interferes with intrusive cameras on, say, police surveillance helicopters. The trailer park guy tries to collect rent from a guy who tells him to tell his father to fuck off. A girl sitting on a peer soaking the sun contemplates moving to LA because things here are too slow, everyone's too old. Mike is unsettled by this, removes his shirt and chases the girl with a knife. It is now night time. Mike catches the girl and slits her throat. The trailer park guy, on the cordless telephone, talks to his dad about bulldozing the trailer park. For the second time in the picture, Shaun delivers a soliloquy from his garden. "Flowers are the natural beauty. I love these flowers. My grandmother used to come over with my mother as a little child and used to..." Mike suddenly jumps out on Shaun, giving him a (genuine) jolt. "We're friends, right!" he insists, before going off to the bathroom with a knife. The film is interrupted by a psychedelic blot, rotating. When the film returns, it is subject to solarisation. Mike dons a mask and howls. Shaun charges in from the garden. "What the fuck is going on in my house?" he bellows. Then Mike chops off his head and declares: "Sweet smell of success." Mike rides to Shaun's (ex-)girlfriend's house and makes a pass at her. "I like your pants," he tells her. (They're a floral design.) The solarisation nudges in, but before anything untoward can happen a second girl appears on the scene. She seems intent on renting a room in the house. Quickly showing her around, Shaun's girlfriend takes a shower and leaves the prospective tenant to lay on the bed. Mike returns (?) and the girl is murdered. He moves in toward the shower, knife drawn for another kill. "See, dad," he later tells one of the headstones in the graveyard, "I told you everything would be all right." A flashback to each kill closes the picture.

STATE OF ECSTASY (1993)

A topless girl tells a child that daddy will be home soon. Daddy arrives home. His topless wife is aged 15. From behind their trailer home front door comes a knocking and a shouting. "Open up. I know what you kids are doing in there!" It's the landlord, fat

Jackie Mansonetti, come for the rent. Thompson lets him in. Mansonetti tells him, "I love children and children love me. Ha Ha Ha!" In reality, Thompson is an undercover FBI agent attempting to bust Mansonetti for child pornography and drug offences. He tells two fellow agents that the people who live in this area are basically good people. Being poor, however, they fall prey to Mansonetti. He feeds on them, deals them heroin and 'minds' their kids in exchange for more drugs. Watching cine film belonging to the child pornographer, Thompson has second thoughts about busting the addicts, the "basically good people". Mansonetti, on the other hand, "is dangerous." The Psychedelic Shack is a store that sells [dunno]. The proprietor opens a big box of stuff and talks to a customer about getting high and coming up negative in drug tests. We return to this place on several occasions for no discernible reason. Thompson picks up a long-hair junkie by the name of John. In order to avoid a drugs rap, John agrees to work as an informant and nail Mansonetti. The first port of call is a general store. John arrives, collects some shit from the back, and leaves. Soon after, the two FBI agents turn up to check the place out. A genuine derelict walks into shot as the cops are speaking to the guys behind the counter. When the cops leave, the guy who runs the store, tending to garbage in the back, tells no one in particular how pissed he is with everything. He talks about the KKK "kicking ass". Back in his trailer home, Thompson shouts "Dammit. Go get my **Psychotronic** magazine!" His 15-year-old wife does an erotic dance and strip for him as he sits on the sofa. Cut to car interior, travelling. Following orders from Mansonetti, the guys at the general store murder John the hippie. Then they murder Mansonetti himself. Thompson arrives at the store and congratulates everyone on the death of the child pornographer (but doesn't say anything about John). The closing song cleverly samples the drum intro to the Doors' 'Break On Through'.

SKULLFACE (1993)

A howling dog. A strobe light on top of a TV set. A girl with a Danzig T-shirt. Someone called Bill. The



Skullface © MSS

HEADPRESS

girl goes to bed and a big guy leans into the bedroom and says, "Goodnight. Don't let the bedbugs bite." There are a lot of young people in the house. We see some of them. Cut to a car driving by night. Car driving by day. The boy with the howling dog goes to a lake with some beer. A boy wearing a Pantera T-shirt draws a Pentagram on the floor of the house. He speaks some dialogue but is hugely self-conscious of the fact. A moustache the boy is trying to grow wins the scene. Night again. "Black magic," says a black man sucking on a reefer, "there's all kinds of black magic." A group of people air their stoned thoughts for the camera (like they just turned up for a smoke and bumped into a movie). Not surprisingly, these thoughts are pretty fragmentary and bare little by way of 'plot' development. More car driving. Some old person. Some of the kids sneak round to an old house the old person was talking about. "The roof is not plywood," says one of the boys of the dilapidated, uninhabited shack.

"What do you know about Old Man Jake and the [unintelligible], man?" asks one of the party once inside the building.

"I don't know, man, except that he died here."

The group leaves.

Back at the Pentagram, the kids are holding a candlelight vigil, snorting coke from a wine glass. The big guy falls to his knees. Irregularly quick editing shifts to the next scene, leaving a lot of doubt as to what exactly has just taken place. The big guy pulls on a skull-mask and everybody runs for cover. A boy is knifed in the shower. Later, two guys will return to the house and, upon spotting the hacked body of their buddy, speak the following:

"Look at Greg, man."

"He's dead, man."

"I don't know anything about it."

Skullface kills two more people – one with a garden implement, another by hanging – before the film reaches its end.

SOMETIMES AT THE CHEROKEE SINK 2

(In production)

A Coming Soon trailer has a girl in a bikini running down a woodlands path, followed by a man in an

open shirt. The head of a dinosaur with green moving eye is in pursuit. The voice-over is lifted from the original **Sometimes At The Cherokee Sink**. "This is the story of a legend that still exists today... We didn't know what was about to happen."

HEADPRESS Tell us a little about 'The Stardust Plantation'.

MATTHEW SAMUEL SMITH It is a magical place in the sun... actually a beautiful garden and fields of green – this was the inspiration for me to name my music project. The band, the Stardusters and myself, are right now looking for a good progressive label to pick us up. The cool, haunting hip tunes that my brother, Johnny Harry Smith, mixed and produced in a make-shift studio, can be heard throughout my seven year film series and some of my original songs appear in the movies, also. Between the both of us we have over 200 songs on demo to market and reproduce for the future.

How easy is it to cross your band work with your film work?

After initial recording and production, you have to come back to do the post-production mix-down on film. So I would say you have to stay organised, always. I enjoy doing music videos, too. The band needs to set up camp in a new location – we need a more 'active' environment. Maybe my brother and myself will move to London to do some recording soon. We also enjoy travelling to Jamaica and Puerto Rico whenever we have the extra funding. It's been a while since my last vacation. Been a long time.

How did MSS Films get started?

At the earliest development stage in my life, for filmmaking, was when I was seven years old. In Tallahassee, Florida, as a child I borrowed my parents' Kodak Super-8 1972 camera and made animated and clay-model movies. Silent movies is how I got my experience – I used to run a music track from a separate machine just to get sound. It was humorous for my family to watch me struggle to get the equipment in sync... everyone laughing at me... the projectors eating my film. I used to take myself quite seriously back then. It meant everything to hear just some acknowledgement, approval, and applause... even if it was from my neighbours and family. Today, MSS Films is a new production company, totally financed by myself and part-time retail work. I work two different jobs, just to keep telling my stories on film. I love to entertain, arouse curiosity, suspicion, disbelief and be acknowledged and understood by the critics. I am always happy when I get a constructive, cool reviews... and when the general public doesn't try to crucify me.

What is your background in film?

In college at Belmont University in Nashville,



Sometimes © MSS

Tennessee. I became an understudy to William Beckley in Bradenton, Florida. He taught me about professional 16mm, sound film, and lighting. I kept on making independent films throughout this time, and worked in Los Angeles as a production assistant for about three years – working with Daniel Stern, Patrick Dempsey, Alan Arkin. Laurel and Hardy and Jerry Lewis really inspired me to start making linear comedies and stories. My grandfather and his friend, Elia Kazan, also motivated me to attempt the film industry.

You mention that people are afraid to deal with you because of your 'spiritual awareness' and 'wisdom'. What do you mean by that?

My predictions come true 85 percent of the time... and I don't claim to be a psychic, just intuitive. I am a sensitive person and I can speak of a few paranormal experiences in my life. Ever since I was a young boy I would have very vivid dreams and nightmares. My Aunt's house in St Petersburg, Florida, was haunted – and still is – and this increased my initial awareness while growing up. Last year, in front of my father and a few friends, I pointed to a car driving over a bridge. I spoke the words, 'The car is going to wreck. Watch it.' And 3 to 4 seconds later, the car crashed into our neighbour's fence. Everyone turned and looked at me in amazement. I said, 'Hey, I didn't do it! I am 200 yards away!' My dad said I was a warlock. At the time I was still an alter boy at church. A very mysterious situation – something better left unexplained.

State Of Ecstasy revolves around a child pornography ring. Did you have some trouble with that and the fact that the girl, Dixie, is only 15?

No problem at all. Everything about the production was supervised – except for a few scenes on a closed set. Dixie was actually 18 – she played the 15-year-old child-wife of Detective Harris in the story. They worked undercover for the FBI. Total fiction with reality-based situations.

What prompted you to make a film about a child pornographer? It has none of the fantastic elements of your other features.

What could be more terror-filled and demented than a look into the world of a very sick paedophile? It has always been a fear of mine, to not be in control of a situation, and to have a family member harmed or killed by a maniac in one perspective or another. This is the ultimate horror: never knowing where, when or how. Life has no set path to destroy. As a young man in the 6th Grade at North Florida Christian School, I was spanked and beaten on the posterior almost every day. My female teacher – Ms Peters –

was a tall, evil-looking woman with a mean spirit. The Principal would cover-up for her sessions with me in the storage closet. Her excuse to me was always the same: 'Matt, I've got to administer this punishment unto you. God has blessed you with a very funny sense of humour... but this is not the time or place for it! Now, bend down. Kneel before me and accept my rod and my staff!' The sadomasochistic ritual went on for the whole year – until finally some students spoke up and notified higher authorities. No one would take me seriously. I never found out what happened to my teacher who loved to spank me. But it hurt. And I'm a changed man.

Really?

It's true. This and the other incidents prompted me to write the bizarre story of **State of Ecstasy** – how the search for happiness can be found in one's own mind, in any state of being, good or evil.

What kind of reaction did the film meet with when it played the Cinevue International Film Festival?

People were entertained and spellbound, and, I think, a little disconcerted. One critic, Rodd Matsui, said of it, 'The film left me with an eerie feeling... one that personally lingered.' Remember, I produced it for \$6,500.

I believe that Misty Norway – who does the shower sequence in Blood Summer is herself only 16. Aren't these girls apprehensive about playing nude? Aren't you apprehensive about filming them?

Not usually, or they wouldn't volunteer. I make sure they are totally aware of the situation and offer a release form for them to sign. No trouble has come my way due to the girls, but I've been into legal hassles over a few projects.

You met some of the girls whilst a DJ and MC at a nude club. What was a typical night there like for you?

Interesting and uplifting. Also, there was a sense of mystery in the air at this place (in Pensacola, Florida). All the girls had their own stories to tell. Some just needed a friend, and needed some insight and feedback. I'd give it to them. A typical night was just about as crazy as you can imagine. We had girls dancing in these see-through booths, taking showers, lap dancing, private dancing... and Bloody Mary Specials on Mondays!

Some bad things happened while making State of Ecstasy. What were they?

Well, we had one murder – next door on the set.



The Brotherman © MSS

Young 'Dixie' in *State of Ecstasy* © MSS



Justifiable homicide. Vickie – Dixie's roommate – stabbed her boyfriend who beat and raped her earlier that day. I found out while shooting a scene down the road on the day it happened. Also, Robert Andrews, the southern butcher character, has since passed away.

*How did **Skullface** come about? Didn't you run into trouble on that one?*

I wrote it in 92 to be a full-length feature, or computer game, with lots of action and suspense. I am still looking for an interested investor, private or commercial, to help me remake this film on 35mm. The B&W video is a 35-minute treatment, short film right now, edited for festivals and showings. The trouble this one generated was legal. The local law enforcement of Wakulla County, Crawfordville, Florida, and Sheriff David Harvey and Deputy Sheriff Jimmy Sessor harassed me during the filming on my grandmother's land next to the actual Cherokee Sink. The deputies took me away. For two days I was evaluated by psychiatric doctors, and finally released with no need for medication or treatment. Nothing was wrong in the first place, but I forgot that this bible-belt community of ignorance had never seen a real filmmaker producing a movie in their farm community. They assumed I was a drug-headed Satanist violating their daughters. Well, what will be will be. Now, I had to forgive them for doing this to me. I have nightmares about being trapped in an institution and frequent anxiety attacks, so I put all of this on the back burner and finished production of **Skullface** under stressful conditions. The situation arose when someone filed a complaint with the sheriff department over the phone. The affidavit was not even signed properly before they took me into custody. I was at my grandmother's house eating dinner at the time when I heard a knock on the door. I looked outside and saw two deputies on the lawn. I had done nothing wrong. The maid, I think, called the sheriff on me.

*The continuity on **Skullface** is a little eclectic. By*

that I mean I couldn't figure what was going on. Perhaps it was the large quantity of narcotics consumed on the set which encouraged this...

The actors are the same group from my new film, **666 Kill, Baby, Kill**. All of them are lazy beyond belief. They were smoking a lot of pot on the set. The film is a look into the dark universe of these students' lives, in one day.

Who is the black guy in the movie who seems to have wandered in for a smoke?

He is the Dealer and fellow Voodoo Supplier. When 'Smut Rock' speaks about black magic it always gets a lot of laughs from the audience. Notice his 'Save the Planet' T-shirt.

*I like the intro to **Blood Summer**, when the film starts and the guy, Shaun, is already talking '—best friend Mike had an accident'. He addresses the viewer and then the camera pans to Mike behind him having chopped off his thumb. This happens frequently in **Blood Summer** and **Skullface**, the actors talking directly to the viewer. Why?*

Third person perspective... can be effective when used in context. I want the viewer and audience to feel like they can become personally involved with the characters' lives.

Why is the monologue about 'Flowers are the natural beauty' played twice?

During that sequence, Shaun was still in the garden, very high, reminiscing about his past with his grandmother. You see, flowers are given to you at birth and usually, when you die, you get a few flowers on your grave. They are just one of nature's wonders that surpass anything man-made. That level of 'natural beauty' was very short-lived in this film, obviously. As you can tell from what I'm saying, **Blood Summer** is a different horror film.

*Shaun's garden in **Blood Summer** looks like something out of the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers.*



Is that for real – the plants, scrambler, and stuff?

Yes, most of it, ha ha ha. Well, I'll tell ya! The descrambler was based on fact, but [in the movie] it was a prop.

There are a lot of psychedelic optical effects in **Blood Summer**.

Yes. The 3-D red blood visuals during the killing scenes are a bonus I wanted to give my audience. The video-psychedelic effects were generated by the video-feedback method.

Why does each of your movies feature a knife-wielding masked man? I can't help but notice that a lot of time is also given over to driving around in cars.

In three of my movies the killer also uses axes, drills, hatchets... Not in **State of Ecstasy** – he was a hitman. The knife is one of the slowest, most painful ways to maim or kill. The driving sequences symbolise that period of time of transition, whether it be location or used to show change, atmosphere, weather and travel. It also gives me time to showcase some of our cool, groovy music! I plan to change my filmmaking elements and formulas with each larger-budget feature. I do not want to limit my movies to dark comedies and horror.

The plot to **Sometimes at the Cherokee Sink** combines many different elements: UFOs, psycho-killers, Satanism, an undersea creature (which we never see). Was the film initially intended to be as campy as it is now promoted?

As Russ Meyer or John Waters would say, 'yes.' The comedy is partially to blame because of the Ed Wood style performances. The dialogue is hilarious and reminds me of a Fifties drive-in thriller.

I particularly like the incidental music to **Sometimes...** It gives the thing the feel of an Andy Milligan feature. Are you a big fan of Andy's?

Forgive me, I'm not familiar with his work. So I



guess I can take your comment as a compliment, thank you.

In the trailer for **Sometimes... Pt 2**, we get to see the monster. Is the completed film intended as some kind of dig at the over-inflated **Jurassic Park**?

You hit the nail on the head! It took Spielberg \$88 million to prove his point. Our film is now in pre-production legal negotiations. Interested producers and investors please write to me ASAP.

NOTE Since writing this article, MSS has completed several new features, including: **The Brotherman** and **666 Kill Baby, Kill** (A 20-minute short feature. Now let me tell you what happened: Mark Medley broke his leg on the set. My brother fractured his hand during the weekend of filming in Osprey, Florida. We filmed on an ancient Indian burial ground... now a trailer park).

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SADE RECIDIVUS

Lucía Teodora

Whether Jesús Ignacio Aldapuerta ever fully deserved the title he intended to use for his never-written autobiography has been questioned; but then de Sade himself, the man, the spoilt, egomaniac aristocrat, was never the de Sade presented to the world by *Juliette* or *Les 120 journées de Sodome*. Did the very theatricality of Aldapuerta's imitation make him less like his idol, or more? De Sade, after all, saw himself as a playwright as much as he saw himself as a novelist or *philosophe*, and might have been as well pleased by a disciple who looked to his works for instruction in effect as by one who looked to them for instruction in sex-crime.

And it is still far from certain that Aldapuerta did not find in those works inspiration for both. Stretches of his life, sometimes a year or more in length, remain mysterious. What was he doing in Central and South America in 1969, 1971-2, 1976 and 1986? In Morocco in 1973, 1975 and 1982? In Thailand and the Philippines at intervals in the late seventies and mid-eighties? Unwholesome rumours have surfaced (none, unusually enough, put about by Aldapuerta himself) accusing him of a range of crimes from drug-smuggling to *lustmord*. His family, in the days before they disowned his memory entirely, claimed that Aldapuerta was working for a Third World charity, a Spanish equivalent of Voluntary Service Overseas, and this claim is not so fantastic as it might seem: Aldapuerta, who had trained as a doctor, would have delighted in the irony of it. If his diaries are ever deciphered (see the discussion of them below), the truth may emerge: until then, enough is known for certain of what he said, did and wrote to satisfy most appetites for the bizarre, the blasphemous, and the obscene.

Jesús Ignacio Aldapuerta was born into a middle-class family in Madrid on the 6th February, 1950. His father was a right-wing political journalist, his mother a housewife who had enjoyed some fame during the 1940s as the writer of sentimental, even treacly, verse in a number of Spanish women's magazines. He was the third of eight children. His earliest recorded ambition, lovingly recorded by his mother in letters to her elder sister, a nun, was to be

a priest, and he was by all accounts a quiet, studious and unusually pious little boy. By all accounts, that is, but his own: Aldapuerta's own memories of his childhood seem to differ considerably from those of his family, relatives and early friends. The number of small animals, wild and domestic, he claims to have tortured to death, for example, seems likely to have attracted attention even in a country as notoriously careless in such matters as Spain and even given the enormous cunning he said he exercised in concealing his "little sins".¹ Somewhat more credible is his claim to have "wiped my seemingly o-so-innocent arse" on little but the pages of breviaries and old Bibles during Lent, though even here he is perhaps joking, perhaps exaggerating, perhaps lying. Most credible of all is undoubtedly his claim to have been introduced to the Marquis de Sade at the age of 13; the circumstances of this introduction are uncertain, however. Many incidents in Aldapuerta's life exist in more than one version, and this is no exception, for there are certainly at least two references to a first encounter with de Sade among the charred literary fragments found with Aldapuerta's body after his suicide, and each seems incompatible with the other and with a third, fully extant version published in an introduction Aldapuerta wrote to a *samizdat* edition of *Justine* published under Franco.²

According to this, his introduction to de Sade came about through an arrangement he had forged with an old bookseller, a retired priest, who had a shop near Franco's Presidential Palace in Madrid's

Royal Quarter. The bookseller had "the run of my arse", Aldapuerta "the run of his shelves", which included a large collection of smuggled pornography. Again, how is this story to be taken? Invention, exaggeration, or truth? What is reasonably certain is that by his early teens Aldapuerta was acquiring an impressive knowledge of the great works of European pornography, de Sade's prominent amongst them. That this should be by male prostitution chimes a little too well with Aldapuerta's desire to shock, yet other means seem equally improbable. During Franco's reign *pornografía* was both strictly forbidden and widely defined: as in modern Islamic states, teams of official censors trawled through imported newspapers and magazines, inking or cutting out swim-wear features and underwear advertisements. Pornography was certainly smuggled into the country, but it is difficult to imagine how a teenaged boy without very much money managed to obtain any of it. Sex with an elderly and seemingly respectable bookseller is a possible means, but a debatable one: again, decipherment of the diaries may resolve the question.

However obtained, de Sade was a revelation – almost a Revelation. Aldapuerta would later write: "I had enjoyed both pain and sex separately before that time. Pain for others, sex for myself. The idea of combining the two had not truly occurred to me. I was introduced to a new philosophy, a new way of seeing the world, a new religion even."

The de Sade texts he one by one collected and hid behind a *prie-dieu* in the bedroom he shared with an elder brother were in French. He had always found the language easy, but never interesting: from that point onwards, it became a sacred language to him. He would later learn English but, he claimed, out of commercial and literary necessity, not out of love. Adapting the words of Emperor Charles V, he made a character in one of his early imitations of de Sade say: "I would speak French to the beautiful young girl I was flogging to death in a pine-forest; Spanish to a familiar catamite; English to the dry-twatting old nun I was choking to death in a trough of shit."³ Fame and wealth could be achieved in English, but one could only be certain of one's art if one were accepted in French.

Shortly after Aldapuerta had added a fifth volume – *Les Malheurs du Vertu* – to his collection of de Sade, he lost his heterosexual virginity. By his own account, he had been the bookseller-priest's catamite for almost a year and by then even the fact that de Sade had advocated passive as well as active sodomy had not prevented his becoming very bored: "The dimensions of my priest's member were truly Christian in their humility. Here was no super-hard, super-enormous engine of Sadean fantasy. I was bored with it, with him, with always being the vessel in which pleasure was mixed rather than the pestle that mixed it." One weekend, attending a bull-fight,

he was given an invitation to explore new interests. The true possibilities of tauromachy had been exposed to him by his recent reading and it was now his custom to masturbate during the bloodier stages of the *corrida*: he had learnt how to adjust the suspenders of his trousers in such a way as to allow hands-free penile stimulation. By moving backwards and forwards in his seat and jumping up and down on the spot, he "could generally arrange for two or three climaxes during the course of a show – my cries of ecstasy could not be distinguished in kind from those of the crowd around me".

Or not, he went on to say, by everyone. As he was leaving the *corrida* with his family, a note was pushed into his hand – the pressure of the crowd was too intense for him to see by whom. As soon as he was by himself in a lavatory cubicle of a nearby bar, "cleaning up", he read the note. On it, in an "intensely, even grotesquely, feminine hand" were written a name and address, the former obviously false, the latter that of an apartment in a slum district of Madrid. That weekend, instead of going to see the bookseller-priest, he went to the address on the note.

He would never reveal the identity of the woman he found waiting for him there, claiming that she had bound him with strict oaths never to do so. This is unlikely. Aldapuerta was not one to miss the opportunity of breaking a promise when he was safely able, and we are entitled to suspect that concealing the woman's identity was simply a means of ensuring that the very probable exaggerations and embellishments of their relationship would never be exposed. He claimed, for example, that she was of aristocratic blood and moved in circles "not wholly unacquainted with the holy presence of the Caudillo [the Leader, i.e. Franco]". She was also of "extraordinary ugliness" and "a convinced and expert passive practitioner of the Sadean arts". Aldapuerta tells us that her previous lovers had always in the end tired of the exorbitant demands she made on them to inflict pain on her, and added, doubtless more than a little tongue-in-cheek, that she was missing four toes, the little finger of her left hand and the earlobe of her left ear, and had several false teeth and an artificial left eye, all as a result of tortures and beatings inflicted on and eagerly accepted by her. "It was her greatest ambition to be decapitated in the throes of the venerean act, but as often as she tried to persuade me into assisting her in this ambition's realization, so often I refused – for purely selfish reasons. She was too valuable to me to lose, and there was always the danger that the clever scheme she had worked out for disposal of her own body would misfire, and I would be charged with murder."

Their relationship lasted three years, ending, Aldapuerta claims, when the woman managed to hire a lesbian prostitute to fulfil her "greatest

ambition", and was decapitated "in mid-dildoification". Aldapuerta at first said he knew nothing of the death until after it occurred; later he would write several accounts, progressively more detailed and bloodcurdling, of how he witnessed it from concealment somewhere in the room in which it occurred. A blood-stained handkerchief that he would sometimes produce when he was drunk had been dipped, he said, in the blood flowing from the woman's neck stump when the prostitute left, but this was only one of several stories he wove around the handkerchief.⁴ Something he said and wrote from the very beginning, and which certainly rings true, is that he went on to bankrupt the "excessively remunerated puta [whore]" by blackmailing her. That he was blackmailing her for decapitating a client need not be accepted by the cautious biographer: her lesbianism would have been more than sufficient under the laws of Franco's regime.⁵

Aldapuerta added that he used the money to finance the debauchery into which he had plunged since becoming a medical student. This choice of profession is not so very unusual for a would-be writer – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Somerset Maugham, J.G. Ballard and A.J. Cronin all trained and in some cases worked as doctors before turning to literature – but Aldapuerta liked to claim that he had been attracted to medicine for unsavoury reasons. As a symbol of these, he kept a copy of *Le Penseur* in his room in homage to quite another Rodin than his fellow students and teachers imagined: not the sculptor but the amateur surgeon of de Sade's *Justine*, who planned to perform vaginal surgery on his own daughter without benefit of anaesthetic. Inevitably there has been speculation about what Aldapuerta got up to in the dissecting rooms after hours: one of his sayings was that at the time "dead cunt was easier to get in Madrid than live", and a poem from the period, "Madame Guillotine", begins

I want to fuck to the fall of your famished blade
The hot maggotty cunt of a ripe dead young whore;
Laved in the spurts of right bright blue blood
I want to come to the clang of your *cortador* ...

The theme of necrophilia surfaces not infrequently elsewhere in his work, most centrally in his short-short-story "Indochine", which describes an American soldier having sex with the corpse of a young Vietnamese prostitute:

In the afterseethe of orgasm he would let his full weight settle onto the corpse, absorbing its shape into the bare flesh of his chest. Sometimes his weight would force out air from the lungs or fluid from the anus with little soft noises. His penis would stay hard and fat inside the vagina, and come free, when he wanted to roll the corpse over [for anal intercourse], with a pop of released pressure.



Aldapuerta's idol, the Marquis de Sade.

Is this description based on imagination or actual experience? If the latter, the experience need not have been his own, of course, and in any case Aldapuerta's stories and anecdotes often remind one of the comment passed by Oscar Wilde on Swinburne: "[he] was a braggart in matters of vice, who had done everything he could to convince his fellow citizens of his homosexuality and bestiality, without being in the slightest degree a homosexual or a bestializer".⁷

Aldapuerta did not complete his medical degree, leaving the most famous of Madrid's medical colleges after two years to go overseas. As so often with his departures from and returns to Spain, and so seemingly uncharacteristically, Aldapuerta gives no reason for this move. Indeed, he speaks very little of his time overseas, and the obvious conclusion would be that he did not wish to attract attention to the fact that he spent years out of Spain. As already mentioned, he is known to have lived in Latin America, Morocco, Thailand and the Philippines, his time in the first-named certainly taking in Mexico, Venezuela, Chile and Ecuador, and probably also Paraguay and Brazil. He is also almost certain to have travelled more widely in Europe than is presently known, but the ease and speed with which he could reach destinations there and return to Spain mean that few lacunae in his already decidedly lacunose life-story can be picked out as likely to yield certain information about his adventures closer to home.

It is in these lacunae and his reluctance to talk about his time overseas that there does seem definite indication either of crime or of some activity that Aldapuerta did not see as reflecting well on his chosen persona as disciple of the "nefandous Marquis". The likeliest candidate for the former is smuggling, of either drugs or pornography, or both; there are two candidates for the latter: some form of charity work for a Catholic missionary organization or work on behalf of the CIA. Possibly both. The boldest solution might be to take these antitheses and synthesize, portraying Aldapuerta as a drug-and-pornography-smuggling charity worker spying for the CIA, or as someone who did all of these things at various times, separately and severally.

The boldest solution, yes – but also the most absurd. My personal opinion is that Aldapuerta spent time overseas primarily for criminal reasons, though this did not necessarily prevent him from carrying one or both of the other two activities ascribed to him. If, however, he had only carried out work for charity or the CIA, what was to stop him from pretending later that he had used this as a cover for entirely different activities? Telling lies about his time overseas would not land him in gaol; attracting attention to it if he really was committing crimes very well might. Or was not drawing attention to his time overseas a perverse – a subtly Sadean – way of doing exactly that? Was he, by drawing attention to himself by *not* drawing attention to himself, trying to indicate that there was nothing for the authorities to be interested in? Was he carrying out a double, or even a triple or quadruple bluff? Speculation could very well go on for ever.

However, the chronology of his overseas trips would seem to fit well with the hypothesis that he was engaged in smuggling. Under Franco, the most lucrative and readily disposable contraband would have been pornography. Aldapuerta was in Spanish-speaking Latin America in 1969 and 1971-2, and in Morocco, which has a long history of Spanish influence, in 1973 and 1975. After Franco's death in 1975 pornography was legalized and drug-smuggling became far more profitable. Sure enough, Aldapuerta begins to travel to Thailand and the Philippines in the late-seventies and mid-eighties, and though he continued to visit Morocco and Latin America after 1975, he did so less often and for shorter periods of time.

But as so often in discussing Aldapuerta's life, a biographer has to conclude that only decipherment of his diaries is likely to provide a definitive answer. After his departure from medical school, Aldapuerta disappears into a biographical fog from which he emerges only occasionally, and rarely with any clarity. We can be certain of his whereabouts for months at a time, it is true, but this is because for months at a time he was in gaol, both during Franco's reign and after, and almost always for petty theft. Claims in

one biographical sketch⁸ that Aldapuerta was imprisoned three times for drug-smuggling are now known to have been an inflation of one three-month sentence in 1981 for drunken brawling and possession of a quantity of marijuana too large for personal use. The second half of the charge was dropped and Aldapuerta received compensation from the police after it was discovered the marijuana had been planted on him by a corrupt officer.

Aldapuerta is also innocent of the charge, levelled at him by a feminist group in Seville who were trying to close down a pornographic bookshop selling his work,⁹ that he spent time in prison for indecent assault and rape. This charge seems to have been based on his precipitate departure from Ecuador in 1976, when he was being sought by the police after a Spaniard matching his description beat up two prostitutes in a backstreet brothel and left without paying the madame. Aldapuerta's version of the incident is that he had paid *in advance* to be allowed to whip *one* prostitute who specialized in playing masochistic roles, and that the charge had been trumped up against him by the brothel's madame after obscene verses about her were found scrawled on the wall of an upstairs lavatory. Aldapuerta denied that the verses were his, but this denial has to be weighed against the fact that he also complained of being cheated by the madame, who had promised a "exquisite silk-skinned *mestizo* virgin" and delivered instead a "boss-eyed crone of at least 40, with an arse like crocodile leather".

Almost certainly in imitation of de Sade, Aldapuerta cultivated a disdain for and sometimes active dislike of prostitutes; unlike de Sade, he never had to spend time in prison because of them. From what can be learned from cell-mates and guards, he was a model prisoner who tried to avoid trouble and serve his sentence without attracting undue attention. The gap between this and those few of his stories to be set in prison, all among the most lurid and *brutalísticos* of his work, would seem unbridgeably wide were it not for the fact first, that Aldapuerta seems to have been well able, when he chose, to have his cake and eat it and second, that trouble generally seems to have accompanied him in prison without ever actually involving him, at least to the watchful but not infallible eye of authority.

In this instance, Aldapuerta may well have taken a leaf from de Sade's book and decided not to follow it: *M. le Six* was a very troublesome prisoner and suffered because of it. Aldapuerta may have been just as eager to tweak the nose of authority, but rather more inclined to let someone else do the tweaking for him. A word at the right time in the wrong ear, or at the wrong time in the right ear, could easily have done that for him in the febrile and spasmodically violent setting of a Spanish prison, and Aldapuerta, who imitated de Sade's snobbery along with his misoporny, may very likely have

informed on his fellow prisoners to spark trouble or gain privileges for himself.

That he was finally careless in doing so is one explanation for the fact that he broke off his final gaol sentence to travel straight into hospital, where he spent three weeks recovering from a savage beating administered to him by the three men who had shared his cell. He was by then almost 37, mostly disowned by his relatives, struggling with alcoholism, and no nearer achieving the literary fame for which he longed. After he left hospital he enters his "English *longueur*", his own term for the period in which he made serious attempts to master English and translate some of his work into the language. Publication of *The Eyes*, the only book by Aldapuerta ever made available in English, dates from this period, and the realization that he was not likely to see a return on the money he spent on self-publishing it seems to have precipitated his final decline.

Devoted to Baudelaire and the French decadents not so very much less than he was devoted to de Sade, Aldapuerta had always been a drinker of absinthe, and Spain is one of the few countries in the world where absinthe is both legal and fairly easily available. After the failure of *The Eyes*, he seems to have dedicated his remaining funds to drinking himself either to death or into a lunatic asylum with it (wormwood, the chief constituent of absinthe, progressively destroys cerebral function). His discovery after several months that his supplier had been cheating him by passing off something flavoured with a spurious wormwood extract as *absintio* was the last straw: in Spanish, rather more appositely perhaps, *la última gota*, "the last drop" that overflows the cup.

He spent the last few weeks of his life gathering together his manuscripts and such of his self-published books and pamphlets as he could still find in radical bookshops and porn-emporia in Madrid, and stacking them around the edge of his bed. "I am spending my last *pesetas* on a tin of petrol", he wrote in accusation to his family. He certainly bought a tin of petrol, though that this was with his last *pesetas* is known to be false: one of the legible documents retrieved from the impending holocaust was a bank-book showing that his balance was still fairly healthy. In the light of this, the fact that he was three weeks overdue on his rent seems to have been a deliberate attempt to create an appropriate atmosphere for his departure to *la más allá* – "the beyond".

On March 11th or 12th, 1987, Aldapuerta poured petrol over himself from the tin, climbed between the piles of paper on his bed, lay down, and set fire to himself, probably by lighting a final cigarette.¹⁰ Papers packed together in large quantities often display an astonishing resistance to fire, but it is probable that much less of his unpublished work would have

survived had it not been for the explosion of the still mostly full tin of petrol beside the bed, which threw Aldapuerta's corpse onto the floor and quantities of his manuscripts through an open window into the street, amongst them all but one of the six or seven books of his diaries.

Fortunately for the landlord and other residents of the house, the fire was put out quickly once the fire brigade arrived. The way in which the room was cleared afterwards, with Aldapuerta's corpse bundled together with the ashes that surrounded it and carted off for a perfunctory burial, is probably the source of the rumour that Aldapuerta's worst stories were buried with him, and the rumour itself was probably the motivation for the two known attempts by unknown parties to dig up his coffin. Today, after an official exhumation and re-burial, the location of Aldapuerta's grave is known only to his family, who have done all they can to deny his slowly strengthening cult a focus of worship.

Perhaps their wishes have coincided with Aldapuerta's. The way in which he tried to ensure that as much as possible of his work would accompany him into blackened ruin might seem to suggest that he too had sickened of the literary path he had striven to follow. As so often for Aldapuerta, this possibility is mirrored by a contradictory one: he may have been trying to draw attention to his published work by burning it with the body of its creator and, by destroying as much of it as he could, to increase its rarity and *cachet* and perhaps bring about its re-printing.

If so, then he succeeded – to some extent. It is almost certainly true that Aldapuerta is better known nowadays than he was during his lifetime, which is to say that he is little known in the Spanish-speaking world, less known in the French, and almost unknown in the English. The future, however, promises him a more substantial portion of the fame he craved, for it seems that *obsesionismo*, the school of literature he founded and for nearly a decade has been the sole exemplar of, is beginning to attract disciples in Latin America, particularly in Venezuela and Paraguay.

Obsessionism is, in Aldapuerta's words, "part philosophy, part literary technique, part system of magic". He believed that to achieve effect, a writer had to cultivate his obsessions ("the contingent fascinations forced upon him by experience, the exquisitely tender wounds carved into his psyche by life") and present them in his work as powerfully and as mysteriously as he could ("mystery" in this system has a technical meaning derived from Aldapuerta's adaptation of the technical meaning given to it by Spanish mystics). If a writer had no obsessions, or had temporarily exhausted them, he was to set out deliberately to create fresh ones within himself.

Aldapuerta was quite serious in this advice. He divided his own obsessions into *naturales* and *artificiales*, the former, which included decapitation,

anthropophagy, and the smell of petrol, having been "naturally" acquired by him in the process of growing up and living, the latter, which included female urine, primitive jet aircraft, and Hiroshima, "artificially" grafted onto his psyche by a deliberate technique of meditation and masturbation. Perverting a divinatory system called *sortes Biblicae*, in which divine advice is sought by opening the Bible at random and reading the first verse to strike the eye, he would open volumes of Krafft-Ebbing or Havelock Ellis at random and consciously set out to acquire the perversion or fetish described on the left-hand page.

Some he would be unable to acquire; others would form the themes of some of the most powerful of his stories. Presented in the right way, he believed, an obsession would be absorbed by the mind of a reader whether or not that reader wished it. The "right way" included certain linguistic effects, amongst them a seemingly haphazard use of capitals. These effects were based on an alphabetic numerology Aldapuerta had devised from what almost all commentators have seen as a neurosis of the Marquis de Sade, who had obsessively examined the letters he received while in prison for the clues he believed they contained to when he would be released (he would count characters, make calculations based on the dates letters were sent, and so on).

Aldapuerta believed that this Sadean obsession, far from being an incipient form of madness, had captured a hidden truth about written and spoken language: that each contains an immensely powerful rhythmic potential, partly drawn upon in poetry at a conscious level but almost entirely neglected in prose – at a conscious level. It was not merely a phonetic phenomenon, but also, as de Sade had divined, an alphabetic, with the number of times capital letters (for example) appeared in a sentence exercising definite effects on the mind of the reader. By arranging and organizing sentences and letters in certain ways, and when necessary violating the strict canons of grammar and orthography, a writer could marry these effects to the theme of a story in such a way as to "write his will" into a reader's mind. Aldapuerta sometimes said that the only reason he was unable to write a story that would literally drive those who read it insane was that he himself would have become insane during its composition.

Such effects are obviously dependent to a great extent on the language in which they are pursued, and Aldapuerta's desire to ensure that they survived translation is believed to have been why he himself undertook the translation of *The Eyes* into English, and also why the English of this translation often seems somewhat odder than Aldapuerta's admittedly limited expertise in English would lead one to expect.

Some have questioned the seriousness of Aldapuerta's intent in the claims he made for his literary system, but there is no doubt that he was fascinated – "obsessed" (*obseso*) – by hidden

meaning and the subconscious effects of language in all its aspects, including script. The most immediately obvious example of his obsession with the last is his diaries, which he wrote in a script that has still to be deciphered. As far as is known, it was invented by Aldapuerta: attempts to link it to such things as the "Enochian" script of the Elizabethan magus John Dee have failed,¹¹ and it seems likely that more mundane cryptographic techniques will be more fruitful. Those who have attempted the task of decipherment so far (and that includes almost all of those few to have seen the script) are agreed that the language it conceals is probably not Spanish, which, like English, frequently uses short words – *el, la, los, las, de, en, a, y* – that would be readily apparent in even short passages of disguised Spanish. They are not readily apparent in the pages of Aldapuerta's diaries, and so unless he was disguising them in some way or employing a form of telegraphese, the language he is using is not Spanish. Besides a typical European *littérateur's* competency in French, English, Latin, Greek and German, Aldapuerta is known to have been reasonably fluent in Arabic and Tagalog (a language of the Philippines) and is believed to have at least studied Quechua (a group of languages spoken in South America). If one of or an admixture of these languages lies behind the script, decipherment cannot be indefinitely postponed; if, as has been suggested, not merely the script but also the language was of Aldapuerta's own invention, we may never unlock their secrets.

This latter possibility is, fortunately enough, difficult to sustain in face of the fact that Aldapuerta included the diaries in the holocaust he planned around his suicide. One, indeed, was found clasped in the arms of his corpse, as though to make doubly sure of its incineration. Ironically enough, it was protected by being held against his body and though its pages were stained by molten fat, it is the least damaged by fire of the six or seven known to have been amongst his papers (at least two are now missing). If Aldapuerta had believed the diaries to be indecipherable, he would surely not have wished them destroyed. Surely? Well, perhaps not. Nothing is yet sure about Aldapuerta's motivations or life: the diaries offer perhaps the best chance of discovering the truth about a writer for whom truth was always far less important than theatrical effect, personal pleasure, and sexual obsession. The truth about him, if it still exists, may never be known, but Aldapuerta's unique vision of horror and philosophy of literature will surely live on, though whether this is to be in the hearts and minds of a handful of devotees or in the hearts and minds of millions only the coming millennium will reveal.

I'd like to thank David Kerekes, David Slater and Simon Whitechapel for valuable help with the above article.

NOTES

1. Quotations from Aldapuerta come unless otherwise indicated from a collection of his *pensées* and anecdotes in preparation by Olga Bernárdez of Madrid (¿Vaya con dos?).

2. Copies of the book itself are extremely rare, but the introduction to it was later re-printed in a special Aldapuerta edition of *Escalofrío* ("Shuddering Chill"), a Cuban horror fanzine.

3. "A Long Weekend at Florbelle". English-speaking devotees of de Sade will readily recognize the jocular adaptation of his lost "The Days at Florbelle" (which Aldapuerta sometimes said he would one day re-create), but the exegesis is not exhausted with that. In Spain, a long weekend is made by the addition of a Monday or Friday holiday to a public holiday on Tuesday or Thursday: this intercalation is called a *punte*, or "bridge". From his constant tendency to anti-clericalism and occasional tendency to sesquipedalianism, Aldapuerta was nicknamed at medical school *pontífice*, or "pontifex", which has traditionally been folk-etymologized as "bridge-builder". This kind of difficult-or-impossible-to-translate paronomasia is common in Aldapuerta's work.

4. At other times he would say it was blood from a Mexican prostitute eviscerated during an earthquake by a fallen ceiling joist "half-a-minute after I had lifted myself off her sweating carcass to dress"; blood from a Filipino rent-boy whom he had hired to swim out to a house-boat and who was attacked by sharks *en route*, being discovered in the morning gripping the gunwale in *rigor mortis* with the lower half of his body gone; blood from the fragments of a jaguar that had had a lit stick of olive-oil-greased dynamite inserted in its anus and been turned loose by a group of Maoist guerrillas in Peru; finally, blood from an unsuccessful castration attempted on Aldapuerta himself by an anonymous assailant in a back-street in Tangiers. This last story was told mostly to women he was trying to seduce: one wonders whether Aldapuerta would later invite them up to his room to see his stitchings.

5. This story becomes more doubtful still in light of the fact that decapitation was one of Aldapuerta's *obsesiones*. See later in the article for a discussion of these.

6. *cortador* = "cutter"; the stress is on the first and third syllables. The poem is taken from *Poemas Sádicos* ("Sadistic Poems"), a pamphlet self-published by Aldapuerta c. 1970.

7. *The Secret Sex Lives of Famous People*, Irving Wallace et al., pg. 424

8. *Escalofrío* Aldapuerta special mentioned above.

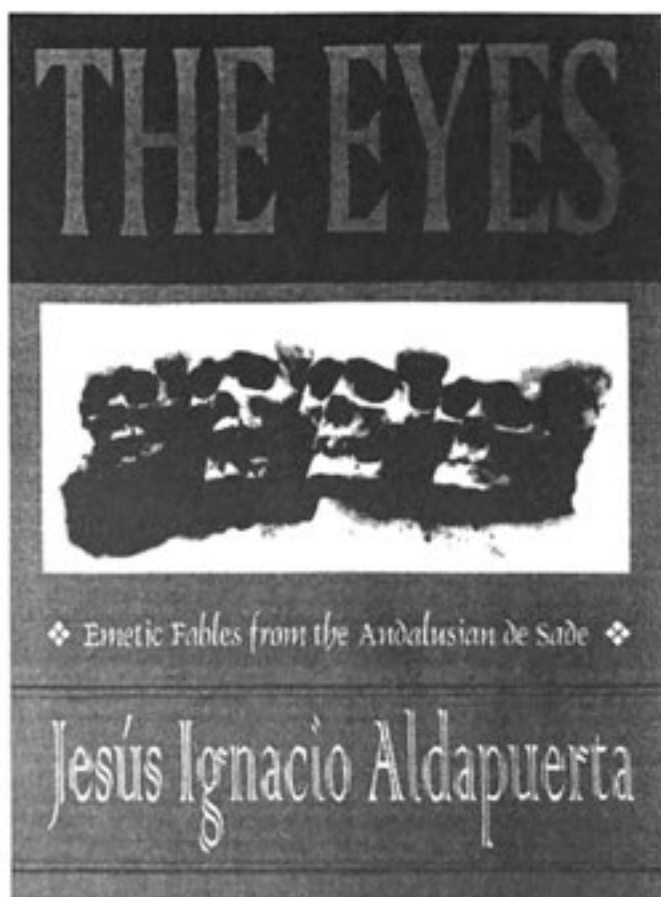
9. See the short article in *El Diario*, 6/xii/1982.

10. Death by fire seems to have fascinated Aldapuerta and occurs several times in his stories. In his short story

"Orpheus", for example, he combines its suicidal form in particularly nasty fashion with his fascination with the death of the hyper-pneumatic American film-star Jayne Mansfield in a car-crash.

11. See issue 7 of the Spanish occult journal *Sobre-Gnosis*. Other phylogenetic relationships suggested have included Coptic, Ethiopic, and Easter Island hieroglyphs: strained is perhaps the kindest word for these.

At the present day, Aldapuerta's reputation is very similar to that of H.P. Lovecraft in the early years following his death, kept alive in amateur "fanzines" and in battered and increasingly rare copies of books published during his lifetime. Aldapuerta has been waiting for some time for an August Derleth and an Arkham Press to rescue him from semi-oblivion: whether these have arrived in the shape of Headpress and their very welcome re-issue of *The Eyes* under the Critical Vision imprint remains to be seen.



Copies of Aldapuerta's *The Eyes* are available on a first come first served basis for £5.95 + postage 50p UK/£1.00 Euro/£2.00 Elsewhere. Due to the nature of the material an age statement is required indicating buyer's adult status.

"A thoroughly shocking resurrection. Aldapuerta makes de Sade, Bret Easton Ellis, and Dennis Cooper look like lily-livered nancy-boys."

hyper-hypocrisy & the EXECUTION PROTOCOL

David Slater

Perhaps the press reaction to the video release *Executions* was something to be expected. So too the political response. It is amusingly ironic that politicians and religiously inspired campaigners censure the video which is itself a catalogue of politically and religiously inspired killings. Perhaps that aspect is what they fear most. *Executions* is a valid document, it is a view of reality the politicians would prefer to censor from the public. With harrowing images backed up by equally distressing statistics it is as shocking and disturbing as it should be.

One can only assume, after viewing the documentary, that those accusing it of sensationalism and exploitation could not possibly have seen the film. Again, this is typical. Politicians are all too aware of the ease of gaining public exposure if they condemn a video, and, in general, that is the *raison d'être* for their claims of moral effrontery. For the most part, the general public fail to identify the cunning such a disposition shows up. The people who castigate the video and not the horrific executions it depicts are fundamentally immoral. So detached from reality are they that they perceive the editing-together of scenes onto videotape a far greater violation of morality than the systematic killing of people.

The People, under the pre-emptive heading **STORM OVER REAL-LIFE EXECUTIONS ON VIDEO**, June 4th, reported that the film included the execution of Nick Ingram who died in the electric chair in Georgia. This claim isn't true and reveals that the reporter was commenting on something he hadn't even seen. Perhaps the implication that it

showed the execution of a Briton was to generate public distaste and distress Ingram's parents. At the time of the report the video had yet to reach the High Street. The documentary was with the BBFC for certification, therefore there was no 'storm' of protest as the heading asserted. The piece was intended to be the catalyst of an outcry, to *provoke* a storm. Unfortunately for the paper the outrage and protest it hoped for was only espoused by a few.

Mary Whitehouse, that antediluvian crusader for insipidness, said of *Executions*, "Video films such as this are a danger to society because they cause increased violence and lawlessness." Such a farcical and erroneous comment is characteristic of the redundant campaigner who's philosophy is founded on misinformation and lies. Had she been speaking of the Bible or any other intrinsic religious tome, however, the statement would be factually correct. If Whitehouse had viewed the video, what would she have thought of the brief sequence filmed by in former Yugoslavia where the camera reveals the carnage in a torture laboratory? The commentator informs that the victims (tortured with power-tools and most with the tops of their heads smashed off with sledge-hammers) were either Christians or Muslims, it was impossible to tell. The statement, of course, suggests that the *torturers* were likewise either Christians or Muslims. Would Whitehouse speak out about the evil nature of Christians if they were shown to be the perpetrators? The answer is probably no. But she says of those who simply want the right to view the documentary, "... basically they really are sick."

As the subject of executions was topical, MP Nigel Evans clung on to the publicity band wagon when he learned Channel 4 planned to screen a season of death penalty related programmes. Evans even had the effrontery to suggest Michael Grade, head of Channel 4, should resign because of the



The kind of things political and religious activists do to people and what they don't want you to see



The team behind Executions

decision. Typical of a political hypocrite, he claimed concern for youngsters "who could find real scenes of executions extremely disturbing". What is quite astonishing with Evans' apparent revulsion of the process of execution is that he is an enthusiastic advocate of the legalised killing of human beings.

To castigate a *documentary* that exposes the slaughter of sometimes-innocent people on the one hand, and support this very barbarity on the other, is cognate to Ian Brady criticising parents for spanking their children. Evans is simply following in the footsteps of similar parliamentary charlatans like Graham Bright and David Alton. Bright was the first to see the benefits of attacking video and gained brief attention after he instigated the Bright Bill in the mid-80s. Alton descended to the gutter by exploiting the shocking murder of toddler James Bulger and achieved ephemeral national fame, and, of course, retention of his parliamentary seat. Seeing an opportunity to get his name back in the papers and promote his "family values" status, Alton said, "I'm appalled that they might sell this. WH Smith use it to be a family store." The man must not be aware that for the past 20 years WH Smith have been selling best-selling fiction, such as *The Fog*, that depicts a paedophile indulging in orgiastic sex with schoolboys before they chop off his erect penis with garden shears.

The negative press coverage prompted the banning of the video from the shelves of WH Smith and John Menzies. Although John Menzies waited until they had sold all their stock and WH Smith's had only removed it from the shelves, and the film remained available on request from 'under the counter'. In both cases the greed for money overrode any moral position. But avarice only delayed their capitulation to the whims of a few holier-than-thou journalists and the film finally became unavailable from both stores. The excuse WH Smith seemed to

be pandering around for their refusal to continue selling the film, was that they were originally under the impression that Amnesty were involved with its production and had later learned this wasn't true. Does this mean that if Amnesty had had their logo on the box WH Smith would have kept it on the shelves? No, of course not. They simply didn't have the courage to stand up to the press, and their earlier statement that "it has an 18 certificate and

customers wishing to buy the documentary can", was evidently a lie.

Unsurprisingly, the **News of the World** was one of the loudest plaintiffs, blaring its fallacious argument under headers like: 'BAN IT! NEWS OF THE WORLD EXPOSES SICK EXECUTION VIDEO THAT WH SMITH IS HAPPY TO SELL' Despite their accusation of the documentary's 'sickness', they couldn't resist giving graphic details of its contents and using stills of the dead with captions like: THE END: A BULLET RIDDLED BODY SLUMPS. Alleging concern for the nation's children, the reporters who wrote the piece failed to grasp the fact that they themselves are party to one of Britain's sleaziest, most vacuous tabloids that pimps sex and violence to British children every Sunday.

A randomly chosen copy of **NOTW** [29/10/95] (purchased for the purpose of determining its child-suitability), promises JAGGER'S SEX ROMP WITH PORN MODEL; EVIL SEX ORGIES OF BLACK MAGIC SECT; FALDO AND HIS BIRDIE GOT BUBBLY IN JACUZZI; PERVERTS PAY FOR RUMPY-PUMPKIN; SAFARI BOSS SATISFIES SICK LUST ON VIRGIN VILLAGE GIRLS (with photo of man on bed with naked children). On p.25 an article on video regulation describes sex education videos as 'filth disguised as instruction'. On p.46 they offer pornographic videos (at pocket-money prices) stating that 'these videos are full-length... showing adult action... not 'soft-shorts'...'.

The same edition had a two-page spread on the hoax phonecall made to the Queen by Canadian DJ Pierre Brassard. In the piece the hoax was described as a 'wicked invasion of privacy' and Brassard as 'greedy' for agreeing to accept the expenses offered by the newspaper to fly him to the UK for an interview. However, if the reader wanted to listen to the 'private' conversation, **NOTW** had a telephone recording available... at a price, of course.

BLYTH AUGOGO

forty-three minutes in
another town

David Kerekes

If you can imagine Frederick Wiseman on a budget of £200 – that compelling documentary manner of his, void of extraneous narration, but no money to work with – then you are some way towards imagining **REPUBLIC**. Shot entirely on location in Blyth, Northumberland (voted in some report or other as being the worst town in Britain), this B&W, 43 minute film sets to recording non-events in the lives of several of the town's local folk. It is, on occasion, a quite extraordinary spectacle, exposing with mindbending frequency the quirks and everyday madness of its subjects.

In the home of pensioner Eileen Griffiths, she and neighbour Dorothy Bates sit and talk about the old days when it was safe to leave the front door ajar without fear of burglary. Dorothy then gets up and dances to a Jim Reeves record, a mad kind of clapping hands dance. She twirls on the spot and rocks backwards and forwards. Eileen sits there and smiles – she has seen the dancing a million times before. When Dorothy stops, Eileen applauds. Abrah Ahmed, on his market stall, in between serving customers, divulges 'facts' on the origins of the people of Blyth and how he got into Britain on a dodgy passport. He reiterates his conversation with Customs Officials: "They said, 'We let someone through on this passport two hours ago'. I said 'Ingleesh I no speak' and they said, 'Okay, you go ahead.'" It isn't clear how much of what the opinionated Ahmed has to say might be kidology – the self-same dodgy passport goes on to aid 50 of his friends and family in getting into the country. Sitting on a bed, Vivien-Armstrong Brown and Joan

Sewell reflect on the nature of interpersonal relationships. On his guitar, Jamie Stuart strums one of his own compositions ("Standing around/ Standing around/ Standing around") and later reveals the intricacies within 10CC's **Greatest Hits** album packaging. Lorraine Boyd, young and full-of-figure, takes to the streets with a microphone and attempts to initiate vox pop interviews. Is Blyth the worst town in Britain?, she asks. One old dear categorically refutes the accusation and stresses at some length how fantastic a place it really is. There is a marginal downside, however. "Boozin'... Break-ins... Glue sniffers... Teenagers... We're pestered where we live," the Granny eventually confers. Lorraine is demandingly exuberant. She holds the mic to her own lips when it is the subject who is speaking. Back in the home of pensioner Eileen Griffiths, Dorothy is still twirling and clapping to Jim Reeves on the gramophone.

Republic was conceived and directed by Neil Richardson and Oliver Griffin, shot on Hi-8 video tape between the months of July 1993 and January 1994. Editing took place over two days the following May. It is their first film. Says Oliver, "When we started making the thing, we never anticipated what we would do with the final footage. No one received any payment for their participation and the majority of participants aren't aware of the film's existence."

Here follows a photographic record of **Republic's** key players. Commentary [*in italics*] by Oliver Griffith.



"I think this is becoming a Black and White issue, which it isn't – from my point of view. I love British people. I wish they could be educated better, like the rest of mankind." On evolution and race.

ABRAH AHMED is a market trader on our local market at Blyth. A devout muslim and occasional public speaker. He has no knowledge of the film's existence.



"You can't get turned on by an ugly bloke. I mean, I'm talking about something I know about." On finding a Mr Right and the possible drawbacks inherent. **VIVIEN-ARMSTRONG BROWN**: Middle-aged ex-rocket

scientist (so she claims), and survivor of the Robert Sartin spree shooting at Monkeaton a few years ago. She claims he fired at her and the bullet went through her hair and left a permanent grey streak which is why she dyes her hair red. Lists her favourite bands as W.A.S.P. and Magnum.



"There was 2/6 on the mantelpiece which was sacrosanct because it had to pay the doctor if you had to bring the doctor in. But nobody brought the doctor unless it was the last resort." On the Good Old Days.

EILEEN GRIFFIN: Retired grandmother of nine. Devout churchgoer

(R.C.) and sometime public speaker. Was prescribed amphetamines as part of an experiment with 100 other people in her home town, Whitley Bay, and has never looked back since.



"I thought they called them willies." The Freudian punchline to a recurring childhood dream which incorporated cleaning the house with a broom.

DOROTHY BATES: Neighbour of Eileen Griffin and long-time dancer. First came to our attention while, in the middle

of my grandmother's 80th birthday celebrations, she got up on a stage and danced alone in front of 100 people.



All Photos Ned Richardson

any other to replace him... except Clint Eastwood." On Robert DeNiro.

JAMIE STUART: Just recently left school. Jamie has a great difficulty in keeping quiet. An avid music and film fan, he divides his time between working on a Government Training Scheme and watching *Taxi Driver*, his favourite film.



"We used to go down the street and pretend we were doing surveys and pretend we were dead important just so I could get noticed. I used to always pretend I was introducing things and presenting television shows." On the burning desire to

land a job as a TV presenter.

LORRAINE BOYD promised us £100 if she got the job of presenter on *The Word*. She failed. Student who so wants to be famous. Is currently about to star in a film being organised by a Hollywood producer (so she claims) and lives in Gateshead. A most nauseating person. Also has no knowledge of *Republic*.

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"He's a damn good actor. I mean, I couldn't think of

LETTERS

WRITE: HEADPRESS, PO BOX 160, STOCKPORT,
CHESHIRE, SK1 4ET, GREAT BRITAIN

17 April 1995

☐ Hope all is well and the publication looks good. Since, I've been getting ready to locate new investors for **The Black Leather Jacket** © 95 A MSS Feature Film Production \$160,000 US est. budget 35mm. Please send a few copies of the magazine.

Take care,

Matthew Smith, Florida

☐ I felt I had to write after reading the article in issue #10 about The Campaign for Decency in Literature. I fully agree with some people's concern that young children may come into contact with "corrupting" literature, but surely the simple solution for this is to place age certificates on books as with videos. I don't feel that anyone has the right to dictate what responsible adults can or cannot read.

The thing that annoyed me the most about the article, however, was the way the religious nuts hypocritically condemn other books. In case it has escaped their notice, the **Bible** is cram-packed with death, violence, murder, vengeance, adultery... need I continue? The Book of Revelations has also been used by perverts and [illegible] to fuel their fetishes. Indeed, the late Jeffrey Dahmer was a fan of Revelations due to the imagery it contains (see 'To Kill and Kill Again', Channel 4, 1993).

Perhaps these campaigners should look a little closer to home before attacking other sources - "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone" and all that.

Keep up the good work.

Alison Scott, Rochdale

Thanks for your comments, Alison. Weighing up the pros and cons, the idea of certificating books is probably a very bad one. If age certificates were to become compulsory, the literary equivalent of the "video nasties" campaign would undoubtedly result. An official body would be launched to grant books their certificate (and would require payment for so doing - bye, bye the small press). Any work without classification would be technically 'banned'. Books would disappear. Major stockists would control more of market sales than ever before. Independent distributors would be crushed - it being illegal to import goods without first putting them to The Board,

and anyway, why buy Catherine Cookson (PG) from Black Arts Occulture Mail Order when WH Smith have it down the road. As to what age certificate the Bible might itself brandish under such a regime... It's not even an issue: Exempt. Literature is not an immediate medium. It takes perseverance and understanding to be receptive to literature - whatever kind. If the reader is receptive then they're of an age to be reading it.

☐ After years of making do with Bret Easton Ellis books and a worn out copy of **Piss** magazine I came across your magazine and... A-FUCKING-MAZING, FAN-FUCKING-TASTIC. Your interview with Patrick Collins and the accompanying photos were... er... BRILL-FUCKING-IANT and your culture guide is a revelation each and every issue.

I'd like to be able to make some suggestions for improvement but it's just too damn good. (Although I would like to see it published more often - I know quality takes time, but I can hope.) Your Rage & Torment (issue 9) inspired me so much that I sprang to my typewriter and bashed out this little ditty:

'Ode to an MP'

There once was an MP called Steve,
Who discovered that he couldn't breathe,
And during orgasm
He had a death spasm
And died as he spurted his cheese

Hope you like it - keep up the good work and remember, if you see me shooting people in a busy shopping centre... You helped make me what I am.

Only kidding, I'm a pacifist.

PS. I typed this using my penis and it's harder than you may think.

G.C., Colne, Lancs

19 June 1995

☐ Send a copy or 3 when you can - I look forward to seeing everything you published. Take care. Next film - **The Brotherman** - is on Super-8. Almost half-finished, now in production. Still need \$4,500. This is my best story yet!!

Your friend,

Matthew Smith, Florida

☐ Dear Dave x 2: I wonder if any of your readers share my particular fetish of wanking off over home-shopping catalogues. There are pages and pages of women, both young and mature, stood standing in their bras, panties, slips and girdles, all in lavishly printed colour. My wife has two or three of these chunky books, but she's be horrified if she knew I was getting horned up and spilling my jism over them. In fact she nearly found out when by accident I spurted all over a couple of pages and had to tear them out. She noticed the missing pages and was a bit puzzled, until I quickly suggested that one of our

naughty young nephews had probably been up to his tricks – an explanation she accepted fortunately for me.

Another time I was in my Mother In Law's house. She had just gone to the shops, leaving me alone, and I just had to rush off with one of her catalogues to have a quick wank in the bathroom. She came home just as I was coming out with the catalogue in my hand. She asked me what on earth I was doing with it, but again I thought quickly and said I'd been choosing a new power-drill while having a particularly protracted crap. I think she believed me – but I had to go and order the bloody thing to make it more convincing! I would be interested to know if any of your other readers have had similar experiences and get the same thrill from all those crisp underwear pictures.

Yours sincerely,

Stewart Home, London

Stewart provided us with the mentioned torn-out pages, making a right royal gluey mess when opened on the breakfast table we can tell you.

☐ Late thanks for your kind words in **Killing for Culture**. Glad to have been of assistance. My SPK book is at the editor's office. Hope all is well.

Trevor Blake, Oregon

November 17

☐ Did all issue w/ the original interview/article come out – or will the new photos be in the same issue? Send #11 and #12, all the "Ad" rates are the same... **The Brothman** is \$39.95.

Matthew Smith, Florida

☐ In 1992 I announced that I was writing a book out the Sozialistisches Patientenkollektiv/Patientenfront and the post-industrial band SPK. In spite of several years effort, I have been unable to produce a manuscript that earns the approval of the SPK/PF or Graeme Revell. This project is hereby terminated: I have recycled, redistributed and erased all copies of my book, all notes and all source material. This decision is final and cannot be reversed. I have nothing to offer and no further interest in this subject. Any copies of my book in circulation are unauthorised and should be destroyed.

What copies might there be of a book the SPK(s) don't like and the author never published? First, Graeme Revell announced he was working on a screen adaptation of the SPK/PF story: this was just after he read an early draft of my book and just before he commissioned his secretary to say he had no more time to talk to me. Second, the SPK/PF published, advertised, sold and profited from an early draft of my book without my consent (edited with a heavy hand according to their ideology, not my intentions): when I told them I did not approve, they too said they have no more time to talk to me.

To the great number of people who have shared so much information and offered so much support in the creation of this book I give my sincere apology for having nothing to reward your kindness. To my critics I state that while I may not have this book, I retain something the SPK/PF and Graeme Revell abandoned long ago: integrity.

Trevor Blake, Oregon

December 4

☐ Thanks for the note... 2 or 3 copies would be appreciated... let me know about postage if needed. The new pix I sent you? Are they included in the same interview, article? Well, take care, I should be visiting in the Spring '96. What's up with your book?

Matthew Smith, Florida

☐ I have read with great interest the article in **Eros Digest** re. your publications. My particular interest is hanging, especially of women, and would like to know if you have or plan to publish anything on this theme?

Do you know of any society catering for this interest? I would be especially interested in contacting individuals who enjoy hanging games.

I await your reply with great interest.

Roger Markman, Lancashire

People who read Headpress



Recognise that gate? Long after the bodies and bloodstains have been removed another piece of vital 'O.J.' evidence surfaces. Was **Headpress** #8 really what they were fighting over?

Photo © Nick Yale

The Joys Of Life

with

Joe Scott Wilson

This column is about the ugliest records ever made... bought by me. I'm going to buy them and explain them to you. Hence my column of reviews.

Some of the conditions under which these records are purchased are quite bad. The price of the dusty albums in the cardboard box often increases in the time it takes to get the things out of the box and over to the 'counter'. It is there that I have to remind the storekeeper of his original quote. "Oh, yeah," he recalls, "that's right." On my most recent record-buying endeavour I was approached by Man Mountain Marco as I left the shop, who wanted some money for the price of a cup of tea. He followed me, telling me how polite he was being about the whole thing and couldn't understand why I still didn't want to give him any money. "You don't want to give me any, do you?" he finally conceded.

You've probably guessed: this isn't Michael Jackson's *History* and I'm not shopping at Virgin. These are the Bargain Bin rejects, stamped 'PLAYABLE ON STEREO AND MONO PHONOGRAPHS' in bigger letters than the name of the group, and pressed in days when vinyl's only competition was the eight-track cartridge. The records under review here are dirt cheap. Most retailers are happy to get rid of this stuff for next to nothing. They don't know what to do with it and they don't want it. Chances are if you don't buy it now, next week *Make Believe* by Wind [Live Records] is gonna end up out back in the dumper. Right next to Hamilton, Joe Frank and Reynolds' *Don't Pull Your Love* [Dunhill]. (And believe me, that's where these two nuggets belong.) Neither am I looking for Bad records or Incredibly Strange Music. I want good stuff. Not necessarily rarities but stuff that when I play it I like it. Or at least doesn't make me feel as though I've thrown away my price of a cup of tea.

Here are this month's Long Playing Pleasures.

Nannie Porres and Hayati Kafe join forces for *Days Of Extension* [Dellja, 1973]. No bones about it – the curious band name/album title drew my attention to this particular platter. According to the sleeve notes, Nannie hails from Stockholm and is considered by the "major music critics as one of the best singers of contemporary music in Sweden". If the picture of her on the sleeve does her justice, suffering from acromegaly has done nothing to hinder her career. Her head is three times bigger than that of Hayati,



who is sitting beside her. Friends of mine (into *Days Of Extension*...) swear that the photo has been doctored and that Nannie's head has been pasted on. Why anyone should want to do this has yet to be satisfactorily determined. It's pretty horrible to have Nannie singing "Hush-a-bye/Don't you cry/I am here, baby dear" and pretend it's you she's addressing. Her friend Hayati, "one of the top artists in his field," croons on some of the tracks in great elevator music tradition. The whole album is totally wretched, lush orchestral arrangements with pseudo-Sinatra melodies. If this is the best that composer of all tracks, John Van Jandel, "member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame," can come up with, the future would have looked so much brighter without him.

Another stinker comes by way of the Walter Raim Concept, *Endless Possibilities* [Decca, 1970]. Picture Walter: he has a beard, a leather waistcoat and his pet Alsatian on the sleeve. Together with his friends – the Concept, at a guess – he's standing outside the White Horse Tavern. On the reverse of the sleeve, Walter is orchestrating... quite what is debatable after listening to the thing. Imagine Swingle II, or some other such group with a penchant for vocal acrobatics, running through their repertoire with a contestant from *Jim'll Fix It*. The vocal patterns here loop and soar, but not at all pleasantly (pleasant being the operative word in Walter Raim's

brand of music). "End-less possibilities/Possibilities/Possibilities." I'd say the engineers played a joke and shifted the pitch of the vocalists independent to one another, but then, that wouldn't account for the soullessness of it all, would it?

Karen Beth's **The Joys of Life** [Decca], while flawed, does contain some genuine delights. I'm presuming that the album was recorded sometime early Seventies, but it could easily be the Sixties. Karen is on the cover, a fish-eye lens picking her out from the giant tree whose branches encircle and dwarf her. The songs are all acoustic numbers with percussion and occasional horns thrown in. Most are maudlin, with the exception of 'It's All Over Now' (not a cover), which is a good folk train kind of thing, and the title track, 'The Joys Of Life'. Despite her striking melodies, Karen has the tendency to sing through her nose. For several days I thought that 'The Doise of Life' was a pretty peculiar chorus for a song, whatever the year it was recorded.

And now **The Main Attraction** [Capitol], by the Main Attraction, was a mistake. I think it was a case of Record Eye Fatigue that prompted Joe Scott to slap this one down at the pay desk. I'm still uncertain as to whether I recognise the group (or are brown pinstripes 'in' again?). While the songs are trippy in

a middle of the road way, there is far too much 'arrangement' going on, with an excessive use of horns. There's also a cover of 'By The Time I Get To Phoenix' which is more than enough excess baggage. I don't even recall that track being on the album when I bought it.



Karen Beth up a tree

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Simon Whitechapel

There is a book that contains descriptions of two young women getting their father drunk and having sex with him, that advises the use of human excrement in the preparation of a basic food-stuff, that gloats over the massacre of the populations of entire cities, that lyricizes the taste and smell of female sexual secretions, that presents without the slightest condemnation a deliberate and gross crossing of gender boundaries. Guess the author. De Sade? Huysmans? Bret Easton Ellis?

Here are some more clues. It has been directly implicated in hundreds of mass deaths, by both murder and suicide, since the Second World War. It has had a close association with mental illness for centuries. It is probably read by Mary Whitehouse daily. It is of course the Bible.

משל לזוֹס מְצוּעַר וְשֶׁבֶב בְּהֵר וְשָׂחִי בְּנִדְיוֹ עָמָּו כִּי יָרָא לְשִׁכְבַּת
בְּצוּעַר מְשֶׁבֶב בְּמַעֲרָה הוּא וְשָׂחִי בְּנִדְיוֹ: וְהָאִמָּר הַבְּבִירָה
אֶל־הַצְעִירָה אָבִיט וְגַן וְאִישׁ אֵין בְּאֶרֶץ לְבָא עָלֵינוּ כְּכֹרֶךְ
כְּל־הָאֲדָרִין: לָכֵה נִשְׁקָה אֶת־אָבִיט יֵין וְנִשְׁכְּבָה עָמָּו וְנִתְּנָה
מֵאֲבִיט נָרַע: וְנִשְׁקָן אֶת־אָבִיט יֵין כְּלִילָה הוּא וְנִתְּנָה
הַבְּבִירָה וְנִשְׁכְּבָה אֶת־אָבִיט וְלֹא־נָרַע בְּשִׁכְבָּה וּבְקִוְמוֹהָ:

And Lot went up out of Zoar, and his two daughters with him... And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth; Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father ...

Genesis xix 30-33

This is reasonable enough as a reflection of the philoprogenitiveness and blood-purity fetishism of a tribal people, but it is hardly moral in the Mary Whitehouse sense of the word. Note too that the action of Lot's daughters is not condemned by the narrator or punished by God. Lot (Lút) is also mentioned in the Koran, and one Muslim commentator has this to say of a mention of him in Surah vii, 80:

Lút is the Lot of the English Bible. His story is biblical, but freed from some shameful features which are a blot on the biblical narrative (e.g., see Gen. xix 30-36).¹

How about this for a shameful feature?

וַעֲנָה שְׂעָרִים תֹּאכְלֶנָּה
הוּא בְּנִלְלִי צֹאֵחַ הָאָדָם חֲמֵנָה לְעֵינֵיהֶם:

And thou shalt eat it *as* barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of men, even in their sight. Ezekiel, iv 12

The "with" of this verse is ambiguous. It can and has been interpreted as meaning that human excrement is to be mixed into the flour: in her biography of Sir Richard Burton, Fawn Brodie lists "the line in the Old Testament where Jehovah orders the Israelites to mix human dung in their cake flour" as one of the weapons Burton prepared against a prosecution for obscenity of his translation of the *Arabian Nights*.² A modern translation makes things clearer:

Eat the food as you would a barley cake; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.

But there is no direct equivalent of "for fuel" in the original: the phrase is an expansion of the tiny Hebrew prefix *b-*, which is attached to *gelel* ("dung") and which can have various meanings (one dictionary gives "in, at, to, on, among, with, towards; according to, by, because of"). The English word "with" is similarly ambiguous, and it's reasonable enough for a modern translation to make the verse completely clear. A few verses later, after Ezekiel has protested

in horror at this divine cookery tip, God makes a concession:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵי רָאָה נָשִׂי לֶךְ אֶת־צִפְרֵי הַבָּקָר
תַּחַת נִלְלִי הָאָדָם יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־לֶחֶמֶךָ עֲלֵיהֶם:

Then he said to me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. Ezek. iv 15

The modern translation again removes the ambiguity (and the dignity):

"Very well," he said, "I will let you bake your bread over cow manure instead of human excrement."³

The verses are still distasteful, however they are interpreted,⁴ but they must be understood in the context of the Babylonian exile during which Ezekiel lived. Life to the Jews, far from their homeland, was agonisingly distasteful, and Ezekiel's words very forcefully and clearly express this. Powerful emotions demand powerful expression. This is a well-established literary principle, but it is not one that seems very widely accepted by Christians. Mary Whitehouse is scathing about writers who seek to excuse or justify their use of bad language by claiming that they are reflecting reality. The prophet Ezekiel uses "bad language" to reflect his reality, but I somehow doubt that Mary Whitehouse has ever condemned him or called for his work to be banned. A less kindly but still justifiable interpretation of Ezekiel's words is that they reflect a mental illness brought about by the strains of exile and of which coprolalia (or even coprophilia) was part. Imagine the reaction of a Christian morality campaigner to faecal references in work by a mentally ill modern writer.

This pattern of ancient ambiguity and modern disambiguation is found again in a famous passage from St Paul. In the Authorised Version it reads:

κ ἄλλοι δὲ τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, καλὸν αὐτοῖς
ἢ εἰ μὴ μείνωσιν ὡς κα' ἐγώ. εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμή-
τω πάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμεῖν ἢ πυροῦσθαι.

I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. I Corinthians, vii 8-9

For centuries, this was taken to mean "burn in Hell". Twentieth century translators have finally arrived at St Paul's real meaning:

But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

There is no "with passion" in the original. The verb in question is *pyrousthai*, a passive infinitive that does indeed convey the sense of a sexual or emotional burning. Why then did the translators of the

Authorized Version not make this explicit? For centuries their false (at best tendentious) reading has been influential on Christian attitudes to sex, and revisers of the A.V. in the nineteenth century did nothing to make good the deficiency. But sex has lost its central position in modern Christian conceptions of wickedness, and texts are re-interpreted in accordance with this.

In more traditional Christian conceptions of wickedness, sex still has this central position. Enormous amounts of energy are expended by the likes of Mary Whitehouse on condemning the sexual explicitness of modern literature and film. There is a great deal of sexual explicitness in the Bible:

גן : גִּשְׁוֹל אֶחָדִי כִלְה גִּל גִּשְׁוֹל מִגֵּן
תְּחִים : שְׁלִמְחָה פֶּרֶס רְמִים עִם פֶּרִי מִעֵרִים כְּסָרִים עִם
נָרִים : גִּרָה וְכִרְבֹּם קִנְה וְקִנְמָן עִם כֹּל־עֵצִי לְבוֹנֶה מִר
וְאֶהְלֹחַ עִם כֹּל־רֹאשִׁי בְּסָמִים : מִגֵּן גִּים בְּאֵר מִים תִּים
תִּזְלִים מִד־לְבוֹן : עֹרִי צִפּוֹן וְכֹאֵר חִמּוֹן הִסִּיחַ נָה תִלִּי
בְּשִׁמְיוֹ יֵהָא רֹדִי לְנֵה וְיִאֲכַל פֶּרִי מִגֵּדִיו:

A garden inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Song of Songs, iv 12-16

If this is symbolic (and why deny that it is in part?), it seems pretty clear that the symbol being used is cunnilinctus. Pretty clear to me, that is, but I'm not a Christian. I'd be interested to know what a Christian would make of

שְׁרָרֶךָ אֵין הִסְתֵּר אֶל־הִסְתֵּר הַמֶּנֶּה בְּמִנְיָ עֲרֵכָה הַטִּים
סוּנָה בְּשִׁשְׁעִים:

Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth not liquor. [ibid., vii 2]

"Navel" here seems an obvious euphemism for "vagina". A modern translation gives "blended wine" for "liquor", which is closer to the true sense. But perhaps not as close as it should be. The word translated is *mezeg*, which can indeed mean "blended wine". It can also mean "spiced wine". That is a beautiful metaphor for the female sexual secretions tasted in cunnilinctus, but beautiful metaphors have not often been used by Christians of any form of sex, let alone of a non-procreative and therefore sinful act like cunnilinctus.

There's also sexual explicitness in Ezekiel, and again powerful emotions are given powerful expression. The prophet is describing the iniquities of two women called Aholah and Aholibah, who commit "whoredoms" with the Assyrians (the two



women are in fact personifications of Israel herself). Aholah's activities prove too much even for the Assyrians, and they kill her. Aholibah isn't warned by this, and her behaviour gets even worse:

וְהָיָה אִשְׁרָה אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וְהִשְׁכְּחָה עַל פְּלִשְׁתִּים
אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂרֵיהֶם בָּשָׂר וְדָמָה כֹּסִים וְדָמָה:

Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh *is as the flesh of donkeys*, and whose issue *is like the issue of horses*. Ezekiel, xxiii 19-20⁵

This is clear enough, though euphemistic. Modern translators have removed the euphemism –

There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses. xxiii 20.

– despite the fact that it is there in the original. The word translated in the A.V. as "flesh" is *baashaar*, whose primary sense is indeed "flesh" (with a secondary sense of "pudenda") and which is used twice, as reflected in the A.V. translation. The modern translators have been willing to express clearly what the Hebrew means (but doesn't fully say) but seem to have held back from expressing it twice ("whose

genitals were like the genitals of donkeys"). And you could also argue with their choice of word. "Genitals" has an antiseptic, clinical air. It's a dispassionate word, and so doesn't reflect Ezekiel's emotive language. He's talking about a filthy whore who lusts after men who are hung like donkeys, and he uses earthy language. The modern translation pretends to be accurate, but in one way it captures the sense less well than the A.V. translation.⁶

In Judges, there's a less explicit but more disturbing passage describing what happens to a group of travellers spending a night in a city called Gibeah:

וְהָיוּ מְשִׁיבִים אִתָּהֶם וְהָיוּ אֲנִי הָעִיר אֲנִי בְּיָדִי
נָסְבוּ אִתָּהֶם מְשִׁיבִים עַל-הַחֲלָלִת הָאִמְרָה אֶל-הָאִשׁ
בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה לְהַקֵּן לָאִמֶּר הוּצָא אֶת-הָאִשׁ אֲשֶׁר-בָּא
בִּידֶךָ וְנָתַתָּ נָשָׂא אֵלֶיהָ הָאִשׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הָאִמֶּר אֵלֶיהָ
אֶל-אֲחִי אֲלֵי-הָרֶגֶט נָא אֲחִי אֲשֶׁר-בָּא אֵלַי הָאִשׁ הַזֹּאת אֶל-
בֵּיתִי אֲלֵי-הָעֶשֶׂת אֶת-הַמִּקְלָה הַזֹּאת: הֲעָה בְּתִי הַבְּוֹנִיָּה
וּפִלְגְשִׁי אִי-יֵאדָנָא אִתָּם וְעָשׂוּ אִתָּם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם הַקֵּטָב
בְּעֵינֵיהֶם וְלֹא-אִשׁ הִיא לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה דְבַר הַמִּקְלָה הַזֹּאת: וְלֹא-
אָבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים לְשָׁמֹעַ לוֹ וַחֲזֹק הָאִשׁ בְּפִלְגֶּשׁוֹ וַעֲבָדוּ אֵלֶיהָ
הַחֵץ כָּדָעַן אִתָּהּ וַתַּעֲלֹדֶנָּה כְּלִמְעָלָהּ עַד-הַבֹּקֶר
וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּעֵלָהּ הַחֵצֶר:

Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, ... saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. And the ... master of the house ... went out ... and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; ... Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine ... do with them what seemeth good unto you. ... But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her and abused her all the night until the morning. Judges xix 22-25

The woman crawls back to the house and dies on the threshold. Her master, after a brusque "Up, and let us be going" in the morning has got no response, realises that she is dead and takes her body back to his own house, where

וְהָיָה אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וַתִּקַּח אֶת-הַמַּאֲכָלִת וַתִּהְיוּ בְּפִלְגֶּשׁ
וַתִּהְיוּ לַעֲצָמֶיהָ לְקָנִים עַד-וָעֶשֶׂת וַיִּשְׁלַח בָּכָל נָכֹחַ
יִשְׂרָאֵל:

He took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her unto all the coasts of Israel. Judges xix 29

There is certainly a moral message in this story, but it's not one any civilised person would want to draw inspiration from, or, nowadays, any Christian.

A sexually "disturbing" (in the Mary Whitehouse sense) passage in the New Testament suffers from what Isaac Asimov once called being "lost in

translation".⁷ Jesus is telling his disciples how to
and the room in which he and they are to celebrate
the last supper.

καὶ ἵσταται δύο τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς
ἵσταται εἰς τὴν πόλιν, καὶ ἀπαντήσῃ ὑμῖν ἄνθρωπος
κείμενος ὕδατος βαστάζων· ἀκολουθήσατε αὐτῷ

And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith
unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet
you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.
Mark xiv 13

That is a good rendering of the original, but it has
meant far less to northern Europeans over the past
few centuries than it would have meant to first century
Mediterraneans. To capture the full sense of the
passage for a modern reader, you'd have to discard
a literal translation and render the second part of the
passage something like "and a man wearing a pair
of high-heeled shoes will meet you: follow him". Or
"a man wearing lipstick"

This is not meant as a joke. Just as high-heeled
shoes and lipstick are associated with women in our
culture, so was the bearing of pitchers of water in
ancient Judaea, which would have been a very
unusual thing for a man to do. A N. Wilson's
throwaway comment on the passage in his book
Jesus is that it would have helped the man to stand
out in the crowds thronging the city as Passover
approached. In a traditional society, a man standing
out by doing something associated with women
probably wasn't allowed to stand out for long. So is
the passage symbolic of something, or corrupt? Who
knows? Like much else said and done by Jesus in
the New Testament it is difficult to match with the
faith that Jesus is supposed to have founded. It
could conceivably be linked with the homo-eroticism
of the Jesus-as-magician theory put forward by a
Biblical scholar called Morton Smith, who in 1958
discovered an ancient manuscript purporting to be a
copy of a letter by the second-century Church father
Clement of Alexandria. In the letter Clement speaks
of a secret version of the gospel of Mark, which has
been kept back from the mass of the faithful, "being
read only to those who are being initiated into the
great mysteries".⁸ Morton Smith links this discovery
with these mysterious verses in the New Testament:

καὶ νεανίσκος τις συνηκολούθει αὐτῷ περι-
βεβλημένος σινδόνα ἐπὶ γυμνοῦ, καὶ κρατοῦσιν αὐτόν·
ὁ δὲ καταλιπὼν τὴν σινδόνα γυμνὸς ἔδωκεν.

And there followed him a certain young man, having
a linen cloth cast about *his naked body*; and the
young men laid hold on him; And he left the linen
cloth and fled from them naked. Mark xiv 51-52

and argues that a part of the Church preserved a
tradition of Jesus' having "baptised" initiates himself,
always at night, and with some kind of erotic ritual".⁹
John M. Allegro, who discusses Morton Smith's *The*

Secret Gospel in his own *The Dead Sea Scrolls &
the Christian Myth*, suggests a further link with a
blasphemous gnostic anointing with semen, or "white
chrism". "Chrism" is etymologically linked with
"Christ", which is a Greek translation (*Khristos*) of
the Hebrew *maashiyaH* ("Messiah"), which means
"the anointed one". If the Smith-Allegro theory is
true, and it well could be, Christian might mean
"follower of the-one-anointed-with-semen".

Where there's sex, so the morality campaigners
seem to believe, there's violence. This certainly
applies to the Bible. There's a lot of violence in the
Bible. A hell of a lot of violence. Much of the Old
Testament is taken up with descriptions of the smiting
and slaughtering carried out by the Jews in pursuit
of their divine destiny:

בכלות ישראל להרג את כל יושבי הערבה במדבר
אשר רדפום בו ופלו כלם לפי חרב ערבתם
השבו כל ישראל הערבה וכו אתה לפי חרב: והי כל
הנפלים ביום ההוא מאיש ועד אשה שנים עשר אלף כל
אדם הערבה

And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end
of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in
the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when
they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until
they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned
unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword.
And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men
and women, were twelve thousand, even all the
men of Ai. Joshua viii 24-25

That might be interpreted as purely human
bloodthirstiness. This can't be:

דן קשבי העמים האלה אשר יהיה אליהם נתן לה
גולה לא חסיה כל נשמה: כי יחטאם חטאי
האמרי המגנני והפדוי חטאי והיבוס כ אשר צוה יהיה
אלהיה

But of the cities of these people, which the LORD
thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou
shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou
shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and
the Amorites, the Caananites, and the Perizzites,
the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy
God hath commanded thee. Deuteronomy xx 16-17

The rich seam of unpleasantness in Ezekiel yields
ore here too. The prophet describes how Israel turns
away from the worship of the true God toward
paganism:

תבא את אל-פתח שער בית-יהיה
אשר אל-הצפונה והע-שם תשים ישיבות מכות את
החטא: ואמר אלי הראה כראשם עוד חטאם
העבדות גלות מאלה: תבא את אל-הצפונה
העבדות והע-שם תשים ישיבות מכות וכן המכות

בַּעֲשָׂרִים וְחֲמִשָּׁה אִישׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶל־הַיָּבֵל יָהִי וְהָיָה
לְרִמָּה תִּקְרָה מִשְׁתַּחֲוִיָּתָם כְּרִמָּה לְשָׂמָיִם: וְיֹאמַר אֵלַי
הִרְאֵיתָ בְּרָאשִׁים הַקֵּל לְבִית יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂוֹת אֲחֵיהֶם עֲבוּרָה
אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ כִּי־מָלְא אֶת־הָאָרֶץ חָסִים וְנִסְבוּ לְהַכְעִיבוֹ
וְהָיָה שָׁלֹחַם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶל־אֲפָס:

Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz [a Babylonian fertility god]. Then he said to me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? turn thee yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations than these... five and twenty men, with their backs towards the temple of the LORD; and they worshipped the sun toward the east... and lo, they put the branch to their nose [an obscure but doubtless highly obscene pagan ritual]. Ezekiel viii 14-17

Knowing the LORD's remedy for these abominations, even a Christian commentator is moved to remark:

after so many references to ritual sin, it is refreshing to find Ezekiel ending the indictment which justified the doom with a definite charge of wrongdoing: "they have filled the land with violence" [viii 17]¹⁰

"Refreshing" isn't the *mot juste*: "mildly disculpating" would be better, because the doom visited by the LORD on the apostates is mass death. An angel is commanded to go through Jerusalem marking on the forehead with a cross "the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations" (ix 4). To other angels the LORD says:

וְלֹאֵלֶּה אָמַר בְּאֵזֶי עָבְרוּ בְּעִיר אֲחֵרֵי וְהָיוּ עַל־
חָסִים עֲלֵיכֶם וְאֶל־חֲמָלֹו: וְכֵן בָּחֹר וּבְחוּלָה וְטָף וְנָשִׁים
תִּהְיוּ לְמַשְׁחִית וְעַל־כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו הָתָל אֶל־תִּשְׁאוּ
וּמִמֶּקְדָּשׁ תִּחַלּוּ תִחַלּוּ בְּאֵשִׁים הַקִּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי הַבַּיִת:

Go ye after him through the city and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark... Ezekiel ix 5-6

All modern translators can do to elevate the tone of this extremely bloodthirsty passage is to remove the sexism of the A.V. ("those" rather than "the men" and so on). This assumption that moral transgression is worthy of death in the most brutal fashion isn't confined to Ezekiel. This is how Queen Jezebel meets her end:

נָכוֹס יְהוָה וְהוּא יִדְרֵאֶלֶּה וְאֵיזֵבֵל שְׂמֵחָה וְחָסִים
בְּסֹף עֵדֶיהָ וְנָשִׁים אֲחֵרֵי אֲשֶׁה נִשְׁכָּרָה בְּעַד הַחֲלֹו: וְהָיָה
כָּאֵל בְּשֹׁעַר וְהָאֵמֶר הַשְׁלֹם וְהָיָה אֲדָמָו: מִצָּא פָּנָיו
אֶל־הַחֲלֹק וְיֹאמַר כִּי אֲדֹ כִי מִשְׁקִיפוּ אֵלַי שָׁמָּה שְׁלֵשָׁה
כְּרִיכִים: וְיֹאמַר שְׂמֵחָה וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַזֶּה מִדְּמָה אֶל־תִּקְוִי
וְאֶל־הַסּוּסִים וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ:

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate... he looked up at the window and said, Who *is* on my side?... And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down; and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horse: and he trode her under foot. II Kings ix 30-33¹¹

Anyone who could see this as "justice" would have been psychotic, but then psychotic is a word that comes to mind a lot when you read the Bible. Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* has a typically Waughian stretch of black comedy in which an imprisoned lunatic describes a vision he has had to another prisoner during their exercise hour:

"No words can describe the splendour of it. It was all crimson and wet like blood. I saw the whole prison as if it were carved of ruby... And then as I watched all the ruby became soft and wet, like a great sponge soaked in wine, and it was dripping and melting into a great lake of scarlet ... I sometimes dream of a great red tunnel like the throat of a beast and men running down it ... and the breath of the beast is like the blast of a furnace. D'you ever feel like that?"

"I'm afraid not," said Paul. "Have they given you an interesting library book?"

"*Lady Almina's Secret*," said the lion of the Lord's elect. "Pretty soft stuff, old-fashioned too. But I keep reading the Bible. There's a lot of killing in that." [Part three, chapter iii]

There is a very intimate connexion between madness and religion of all kinds, but particularly between madness and Christianity. The book that ends the Bible, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, is almost





a teach-yourself manual in thinking like a paranoid schizophrenic: the imagery in the passage above is meant to suggest directly the imagery of "St. John". Christians would undoubtedly say that lunatics read the Bible *despite* being mad. In fact, lunatics read the Bible *because* they are mad. It's undoubtedly true that many lunatics are mad because they read the Bible. Brooding obsessively on and reading constantly about violence and blood and sex aren't good for one's mental health, but at least readers of **Headpress** don't pretend that God says it's OK. Readers of the sex-blood-and-violence-filled Bible often pretend this. The blood-soaked history of Christianity reflects the blood-soaked pages of its sacred texts. And Christianity can also be held responsible for huge numbers of deaths during the reigns of the atheistic Josef Stalin and the heterotheistic Adolf Hitler.

This is how. The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins has famously invented a term for the quasi-biological way in which ideas spread from mind to mind: the meme.¹² A meme like "there is only one god" is part of the genetic makeup of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and in a sense these religions are mental viruses, more or less coherent collections of memes spreading from mind to mind in a way that is analogous to the spread of the common cold or the plague. Judaism is a relatively uninfected virus, rarely spreading beyond the literally genetic boundaries of those it has historically infected. This is not to say that it is not a virulent virus: it is. It has preserved its unique character over enormous stretches of time and space, and exercised a very powerful influence on the behaviour of those whom it has infected.

St. Paul took the virus of Judaism and re-engineered it so that, without losing its virulence, it became highly infectious, rather as if a scientist had

re-engineered Dutch Elm disease so that it could infect all trees. Christianity is Judaism without the meme of racial exclusivity.

This has a very serious implication. Judaism has had many mutually antagonistic sects, and these sects have expended enormous amounts of hatred and condemnation on each other. However, they haven't usually translated hatred into violence, because Judaism isn't simply a matter of thought but also of blood. One Jew may think differently to another but that doesn't make him any less of a Jew in the racial sense, so he doesn't become an absolute outsider on whom violence may be legitimately practised.

Christianity, on the other hand, is entirely a matter of thought, and so Christians who think differently to each other do regard each other as absolute outsiders, and do feel able to practise violence against each other. Nazism and Communism are simply re-engineered forms of the virus of Christianity. Bertrand Russell once said that to "understand Marx psychologically, one should use the following dictionary":

Yahweh = Dialectical Materialism
 The Messiah = Marx
 The Elect = The Proletariat
 The Church = The Communist Party
 The Second Coming = The Revolution
 Hell = Punishment of the Capitalists
 The Millennium = The Communist Commonwealth¹³

He added that a "similar dictionary could be made for the Nazis, but their conceptions are more purely Old Testament and less Christian than those of Marx". In both Communism and Nazism the Judaeo-Christian memes of absolute conviction and the legitimacy of violence against outsiders remain, but the meme of "God" has been discarded or altered. In Nazism the meme of racial exclusivity has reappeared. In *one* sense then, the people responsible for the Holocaust were the people who suffered from it. Nazism and Communism are bastard offsprings of Judaism by Christianity. In more traditional terms, Nazism and Communism are Christian heresies just as Christianity is a Jewish heresy; in Dawkins' terms, Nazism and Communism are mutations of the virus of Christianity just as Christianity is a mutation of the virus of Judaism. The method of transmission of this viral lineage has been a book called the Bible.

The Bible has thus been responsible for many millions of deaths over many centuries. The amount of mental and physical suffering it has caused is incalculable. It is full of offensive and immoral material.¹⁴ What responsible person could conclude otherwise than that it should be banned as a matter of urgency?

Thanks to SP & HR for help with languages not English.

NOTES

Modern biblical quotations are taken from the New International Version.

1. From pg. 363 of *The Holy Quran*, with *Text, Translation and Commentary* by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (various editions, mine n.d.)

2. pg. 308 of *The Devil Drives*, Eland, London, 1986.

3. In Hinduism, however, cow-dung is perfectly acceptable as a fuel, and could even be seen as sacred. The common argument for God's existence based on the innate human sense of right and wrong fails to recognise how the innate human sense of right and wrong differs from culture to culture and age to age.

4. Compare this passage from II Kings:

But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath not my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? xviii 27

5. Aholibah has an entire poem to herself, and she and Aholah a first-person verse apiece in Swinburne's "miracle play" *The Masque of Queen Bersabe*, which was first published in *Poems & Ballads* (1866). The verse is beautiful but mild compared to what appears in the Bible. If Swinburne had been as robust as Ezekiel, the wrath of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, which attacked him for his explicitness elsewhere, would doubtless have been increased, and yet the S.S.V. was a specifically Christian organisation.

6. Someone – I forget who but I think it might have been Philip Larkin – pointed out that the use of "harlot" rather than "whore" in modern translations went in the face of the translators' claims to be using clear, non-archaic language, and could only be explained as euphemism.

7. He was discussing the way modern readers fail to fully understand the biblical story of the Moabite Ruth because we no longer realise the implications of a Moabite's winning the respect of the Israelites: to do so the words would have to be translated into modern couplets like Palestinian and Israeli, Catholic and Protestant (in the context of Northern Ireland), or Muslim and Hindu (in the context of Kashmir).

8. pg. 124 of the Sphere paperback of *The Dead Sea Scrolls & the Christian Myth* (1981).

9. *ibid.*, pg. 125

10. pg. 507 of *A Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Arthur S. Peake M.A., D.D., Thomas Nelson, Edinburgh, 1937.

11. Looking up this verse, I found my eye caught by

For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel. II Kings ix 8

The section "him that pisseth...left in Israel" becomes "every last man in Israel – slave or free" in a modern translation. What has happened? Apparently, a re-interpretation of the Hebrew phrase *mashtiyin b-qiyir* "(the one) pissing on the wall", which has been accepted for thousands of years as the word of God but which seems to have been a corruption of the true meaning.

12. See Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker*.

13. Chapt. iv, pg. 361 of Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1961.

14. Not to mention being educationally dubious. In this verse, describing the building of part of Solomon's Temple,

Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof, and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. II Chronicles iv 3 (see also I Kings vii 23)

the constant π (3.141593) is taken as equal to 3. What sort of example is that?

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A Confession

C. J. Turner

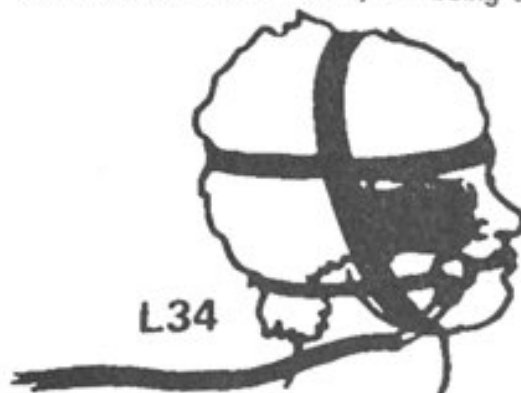
"Christ she's tied up!" The magazine seemed to separate itself from the pile and fall onto the shop counter without any help from my trembling hands. From the cover, a slightly plump, beautiful blonde dressed in a tight black sweater stared at me. A flower in a pot, of all things, was tucked into her lap and she was perched on a stool – no, no, no, not perched – *tied* to the stool. Thank you God, thank you God. Tied to the stool and to the potted flower. And it got better. Rope wound its way round her body like a vine. It trussed her legs, criss-crossed its way up her body, wonderfully separated her breasts into a sort of 'X' shape, found its way over her shoulders and pinned her hands against her back – which had the effect of pushing her shoulders back and her breasts forward. God, it was wonderful! And yet more wonderful was the gag that filled her mouth. A black slash of cloth creased her cheeks and pulled her lips back revealing her teeth.

The back cover was, if anything, better. A young girl in a red sweater peered into my eyes. Slim and pretty, her bonds were not as complicated as her sister's on the front. But, they were more constricting, more accentuating and more simply 'I wish I could fuck her.' Her breasts – making jutting and triangular hills by her trusses – almost seemed to beg for attention and torment. Winding their way around her

body, the ropes gave her a delicious packaged look, like a Christmas present from the gods. And the gag in her mouth, though similar to the other model's, was much tighter, it really seemed to divide her face into an upper and lower half. Her tongue was obviously pushed to the very back of her mouth. Yet it was her eyes that drew you towards the picture. Bulging from her face, they were two lamps of apprehension and fear. She was in your power, immobilised, helpless, desperate, distressed, at your mercy, at your convenience at your "how do you want to fuck me – please be gentle with me – please afterwards let me go and let me live" mercy. God!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The magazine cost £5 and was called **Bound To Please**. Fighting a losing battle to stop myself shaking, I handed over the £5 note. The man behind the counter could not have cared less and quickly put the magazine into a good old brown paper bag for me. As it was tightly wrapped in cellophane, I didn't know what the contents were like (but who cared with pictures like that on the cover, each of which was worth at least two wanks!) so I got home as fast as I could, occasionally snatching glances at the magazine as it lay at the bottom of my carrier bag, flanked on both sides by a hastily bought newspaper. At home, I was able to get the magazine past my mum (major sweat) and into my bedroom where I unwrapped it and opened it feeling I had long-lost solid gold Inca treasure in my hands. My heart almost stopped. It was like falling in love. It was like being told that the cunt who taught you physics at school was off sick and that you had Mr Pleasant Person instead. It was like the first time you masturbated. It was a wildly exciting stomach-churning trip to the sticky tar pit of sex. Once you were caught there was no escape, you were sucked in, slowly and erotically, gradually enveloped completely covered and submerged. All the time of course, with a huge erection.

On every page there was a tied-up girl. Often several tied-up girls, frequently half naked or nearly completely naked. They were posed to follow a storyline, usually some form of punishment for misbehaviour. The girl with the flower in her lap had her own photo story in which, picture by picture, she was trussed into immobility for being unfaithful. A





similar sort of scenario surrounded the back-cover girl – tied like a turkey by her friend as a sort of sexual experiment. Another girl was tightly secured with leather straps and forced to do housework topless. And the world the magazine revealed to me was an even bigger kick. It was eyes completely out-of-their-sockets sexual deviance. Rubber, leather, plastic, PVC, buckles, straps, handcuffs, rope, padlocks, belts, whips, paddles, gags, everything in fact that made up the wonderful world of bondage. A world in which women were decorative slaves at best, and sluts fit only for a brutal fucking at worst.

There were many windows looking onto this world. Magazines with names like **Bondage Digest**, **Help-**

less, **Roped**, **Whipmaster**, **Shackled**, **Kidnapped** and **Restraint**. Names simple and straight to the point, whilst others were excruciating puns i.e. **Bridled**, **Rope Burn**, **Hog-tie**, **Tied-Up Tarts**, **Big Breast Bondage** and **Buxom Bondagettes**.

And the variety of the names was matched by the variety of the trussing shown. Girls with hands tied above their heads, girls with their legs forcibly splayed, girls hanging upside down by their ankles, girls tied to chairs (in one case a wheelchair!). Girls



bound like cattle waiting to be branded (their ankles and wrists tied together behind their backs), girls spread-eagled on beds and even girls whose bondage seemed to consist of lengths of rope running between their legs. Wow!

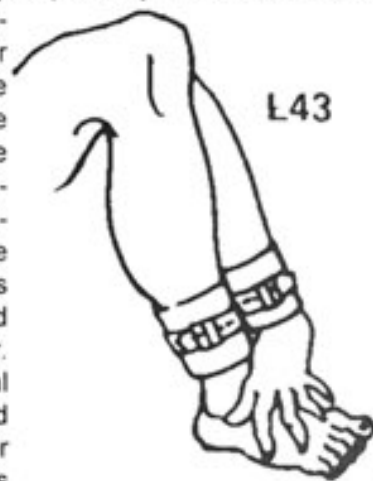
All of this appealed to male instincts. Mine especially. Capture, torment and rape of the female. It took me, I suppose, 10 years of innumerable masturbations to really understand what these magazines showed. I think they showed adoration of women and the female form. Most guys who looked at these magazines (myself included) I'm sure felt that women were an impossible goal (though I am now happily married) and seeing these frequently gorgeous girls stripped, tied and gagged must have felt like winning a lottery. They were yours, in your imagination, to do with as you pleased and they couldn't get away unless you released them. Oddly, the best bit about these magazines was the fact that the models were gagged, often with an extraordinary object called a ball-gag – which meant that they couldn't insult you (verbally 'wound you' would be a better description). But deeper

than this was the feeling that these women had to be bound into immobility and silence because they were dangerous. Unless they were stopped they would take over. They held the real power in the world and men were rather pathetic. Their bonds really restrained strength and in any case, men were weak for wanting to look at them naked and bound. Men couldn't cope with a free woman, a real woman – so men were really the losers. And I think that that is the main lesson I found over years of buying bondage books and magazines.

Recently I visited the Scarabée D'or bookshop in Paris. It sells erotic books and magazines, a large number of which deal with bondage and/or sadomasochism of some kind. It was rather nice to see, at the back of the shop, a huge collection of American bondage magazines, all for sale and all brand spanking (sorry) new. I bought three. The models were just as lovely – though the bindings were perhaps not quite as tight. But the atmosphere of the magazines was as erotic as ever, even if they seemed to say that the future is female.

I'm not complaining.

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MAGAZINES

VISCERAL SLICE [No. zero, 22pp, £1.50 + A4 s.a.e.]
A. Wright, 6 Dale St, Sneinton, Nottingham, NG2 4JX

Subtitled "An alternative look at guns, serial killers, gore movies and death", *Visceral Slice* might at first glance appear unassuming – a patchwork of news clippings and paste-ups with a few original articles thrown-in for good measure – but is worth checking out if only for editor Anthony Wright's artwork. Horribly simplistic and a little bit freaky, Wright's quirky visuals capture the miasma of death and elevate *Visceral Slice* above its humble, photocopy status. Of course it's not a serious look at the world, nor is it satire either. It just is. In the words of the inimitable Dennis Neilson (on the cover, in his lovebeads), "It's great!" Comes complete with pictures of dead bodies and pregnant women posing nude.

KINOKAZE: REPORT FROM THE UNDERGROUND
[No.3, 40pp, £1.95, payable: Mischievous Productions]
PO Box 8868, London, SE16 1ZS



Very stylish, and in a bigger format (A4), issue No.3 sends *Kinokaze* off in an impressive, cocksure direction. This magazine suddenly knows exactly what it wants to do, and, with the

Exploding Cinema itself having disintegrated into a rather ugly *my-people-will-be-calling-your-people* affair, looks set to lose its confines and sloganeering altogether. Ken Babbs of the Merry Pranksters is interviewed, and Cosey Fanni Tutti talks of her part in the sex industry of the Seventies ("I said he could do someone else. I'd do a lesbian scene with this girl there. Well, this girl, she got on the couch, her pussy was so dirty. I went on her and the cameraman went on

with me – we both went – [makes a disgusted face]. Then the director said – [Cosey in mock German accent] 'I zink you need to go wash yourself my dear'.") The main piece this issue is Kenneth Anger talking about his life and influences.

BIZARRISM [No.4, 42pp, A15]
150 Lord St, Newtown, NSW 2042, Australia



It's back after too-long an absence, and the world can only be a better place for it. Chris Mikul single-handedly puts this magazine together which probably accounts for the lengthy interludes between each

issue. This issue includes pieces on William Chidley, an Australian eccentric exhorting the life-threatening perils of sexual intercourse, Madam Blavatsky, the amazing story of Kirk Allen and his cross-over personality with a sci fi character, end of the world theories and predictions, cicadas, weird religious cults, suicide by fire and plenty more. Mikul's articles are generally short, intelligent, and consistently interesting.

BANANAFISH [No.9, 92pp, £7]
Tedium House Publications, PO Box 424762,
San Francisco, CA 94124, USA

Bananafish is the kind of magazine you keep looking at but are not necessarily reading. It's so happening there almost isn't time for a page 1 or an end (the covers are purely subjective). That isn't to say jewels are not to be had, just that the thing looks like you're about to bump into someone else's conspiracy. It's "in" all right. Content-wise, sympathies lie with extreme noise bands, excerpts from personal diary pages, and stuff which makes no sense. The choice piece in issue No.9 is an interview with "film archaeologist" Jack Stevenson with Stevenson talking about his 10 favourite films (they include *Your Job In Germany*, a 1945 war propaganda film, and *My Father's Call Girl*, a "monumentally inept" softcore porn production from the late-Sixties). The original art is outstanding. The writing is often excellent. The package is wiggled out. Comes complete with a 7" single aural accompaniment. "Strawberry Shortcake. Help me. I want my mommy."

FATAL VISIONS [No.18, 40pp, A14.50/US\$16]
PO Box 133, Northcote, Vic 3070, Australia

Any small press publication which makes it to double-figures has to be doing something right. The latest issue of *Fatal Visions*, the Australian film and sleaze journal, hits No.18. Contents include Barrie Pattison on Paul Naschy, an interview with Abel Ferrara (around the time of the Oz release of *Dangerous Game*), and – wait for it, wait for it – another interview with incarcerated hitman and general everything, Mad Dog McKenna (conducted, again, by Gerard John Schaefer). Here, Mad Dog goes on about how he "influenced" Ted Bundy, his

own dealings in the Hand of Death cult, and casts some Runes which prophases the demise of killer Danny Rolling ("Death runes! Death! Death! Death! Death and ruin! This is a horrible things [sic]. I've never seen such bleakness. Oh, Oh, Oh, a vision!"). Schaefer – not what you could call a "pal" of Rolling – really seems to have blown a gasket on this one. *Fatal Visions* [No.19, details as above] An interview with Richard Norton, 'star' of such kick 'em up action fare as *Under The Gun* and *Bloodstreet*, a gander at the 1995 Melbourne Filmfest, Asian stuff, an interview with George Stover (Q: "What memories do you have of Jean Hill sitting on your face in *Desperate Living*?"), and reviews a-plenty.

FLESH & BLOOD [No.5, 72pp, £3.95]
H. Fenton, PO Box 178, Guilford, Surrey, GU3 2YU

If further evidence of the decline of the British film industry (horror in particular) is necessary, check out *Flesh & Blood's* on-going chronology. Issue No.5 covers the years 1978 to 1980, and what a comparatively pitiful catch it is too. As far as we're concerned, 1980 marks the end of Britain's Golden Age and *Killer's Moon* – a psychotic revolution if ever there was one – one of the last great British horror movies. It must be getting truly difficult to work up any kind of enthusiasm for the done-to-death likes of *Alien* and John Badham's *Dracula*, but Harvey Fenton's team of writers rise to the task admirably. It is also nice to see that Norman J. Warren is getting the recognition he so richly deserves. This issue sees the second and concluding part of an in-depth interview with the Norman, but one which somehow fails to mention his later films (such as *Bloody New Year* and *Gunpowder*). Or is that a conscious effort on Norman's part? The presentation and quality of this magazine is exquisite. The only gripe lies with the (over-long) video review section, categorising movies according to the video label. Meaning: the movies play second fiddle to the label (re-) releasing them.

INVASION [No.11, 100pp, digest-size, £3.50]
PO Box 7, Upminster, Essex, RM14 2RH

Abbreviated from its original cumbersome title of *Invasion of the Sad Man-Eating Mushrooms*, this zine bears little relation to its former incarnation in terms of presentation and visual quality. Glossy throughout, full-colour cover and with several colour plates within, it's a long way from the black and whiteness of yore. Part of the reasoning behind the changes, the editorial implores, is that *Invasion* is no longer a predominantly horror film zine ("It doesn't take a genius to work out that horror on the whole is dead"), but aimed instead at a more "mainstream market". That said, by way of content there is very little to differentiate the new *Invasion* from the old. Articles are still focused on the likes of *Reservoir Dogs*, *Clockwork Orange*, Russ Meyer, and Bruce Lee – granted not "horror" *per se* but cult fodder nonetheless, embraced by every self-respecting film zine editor. Furthermore, the definition of "mainstream" is not without bias in this instance. After all,

BOOK BURNING OF THE MONTH A NEW, PERHAPS QUASI-REGULAR, COLUMN WHICH RECORDS INSTANCES OF CENSORSHIP.

ANSWER Me!, the hefty, bilious, self-proclaimed 'Bible of Hatred' has, per each issue, met with increasing favour and increasing scorn. Up until, that is, the latest issue, when it was yanked off British shelves completely. Copies of **ANSWER Me!** No. 4, the 'Rape' issue, were already thin on the ground due to the fact that AK Press, distributors of the magazine in the UK, had decided they wouldn't be handling it. Add to that a raid on Tower Records London, in which police netted copies of that self-same title, ensured that the Rape issue profile slipped down to below counter level. British Customs were already intercepting mail which bore the **ANSWER Me!** return address. Hence **ANSWER Me! The First Three** also being seized – a book-size collection published by AK Press in the United States. A raid on AK offices in London resulted in police netting any copies of the book already to have made it thus far.

Was there a ban on the **ANSWER Me!** book in Britain? Were rumours true that distribution in the States had also hit snags? On hearing that AK Press had intended to fight for the book but then conceded to the confiscated copies being destroyed, we contacted their London office. Said a spokesman for AK: "We took legal advice and was told that it was the right war, wrong battlefield. That the book would be put in front of a magistrate who would flick through it and say, No, That's obscene. Even though we had a justified case, we can't afford to fight it."

Of the quantity confiscated and destroyed?

"The entire shipment. Probably only about 20 copies, but effectively all copies in the UK." This doesn't include copies of the book which may have made it into the shops via other distributors and prior to the police action on AK. "Certainly the police haven't made it clear to anyone what the situation is. No other shop, apart from Tower Records has been approached. And they've never got back to Tower Records to tell them what's going on."

What of **ANSWER Me!** issue No. 4?

"That was banned straight away as soon as it came into the country because it is obscene under British law. No kind of interpretation needed."

Will you be handling **ANSWER Me!** in the future?

"We're still waiting to find out what their [editors Jim and Debbie Goad's] plans are for another issue. Certainly AK in America are handling all their stuff. We would have to look at it as it comes along. We have to play it by ear a little bit."

As to the US end of the stick, a call to AK Press in San Francisco set the record straight. Said a spokesman there: "Issue 4 of **ANSWER Me!** hasn't been 'banned' as such at all. What happened, briefly, is that a news-stand in Bellingham, Washington State, is being prosecuted for selling the magazine, as they refused to take it off the racks when asked to do so. That has yet to come to trial. So the publishers themselves are – as yet – not directly on trial, it's the news-stand." As to the book itself: "no problem."

On the day of the police raid on the AK offices in Britain, British Telecom faxed the company and put a cease and desist order on them with regard to their selling and distributing a book titled **Mellow Pages**, a guide to coffeeshops in Amsterdam. As with most things which appear to be mimicking the telephone company's own **Yellow Pages** directory, however slight, BT jump in fighting. With regard to **Mellow Pages**, AK told **Headpress** that BT "would sue us, cut the phones off, all sorts if we continued to handle it."

Another US-based magazine to meet with disdain at the hands of British Customs is **Blackest Heart**. Unlike the above, the confiscation of this particular title, remains, to date, a one-off individual case (meaning that no one else has yet been caught). Says Steve Midwinter of Dark Carnival Distribution:

"As you'll see there were 15 copies of **Blackest Heart** No. 3 and one copy each of No. 1 and No. 2. Yes, they [Customs] kept the lot. I've never seen No. 1 and No. 2 so how 'obscene' they are, I don't know. I made no attempt to claim the items back. This is due to the fact that Dark Carnival is not an 'official' business as yet, though I'm working on it. I really don't want to rock the boat at this stage as I felt that a court case with Customs would cripple me. I was told that Legal Aid isn't available for cases like this."

AK Press, 22 Lutton Place, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH8 9PE - AK Press, PO Box 40682, San Francisco, California 94140-0682, USA
Dark Carnival Distribution, 17 Cottage Beck Road, Scunthorpe, South Humberside, DN16 1LQ

Four Weddings and a Funeral is as mainstream as they come, but unlikely, it's fair to assume, to receive any coverage in the likes of **Invasion**. Likewise, the book and magazine reviews are all genre related. (Perhaps the only truly original diversion in this new-image is the prime shot of Paul Newman on the back cover.) On the plus side, the magazine refuses to carry any more short fiction (fiction in film mags is almost always filler) and the writing on the whole is good. While **Invasion**, as it originally was, had no aspirations to be anything in particular and came over as madly impetuous, now there is a necessity and an urgency but with nothing new to say. The world doesn't need a "mainstream" magazine that covers the same old same old. Perhaps it is time for the editors to conclude **Invasion** and embark on something afresh?

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA (No. 11, 38pp, 16.)
PO Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325, USA

Publishing partners Tom Weisser and Craig Ledbetter have gone their separate ways, devoting their time, independent to one another, to **Asian Trash Cinema** and **European Trash Cinema**, respectively. Craig, in his editorial for **ETC** No. 11, says he quit as Tom's co-editor, which would

seem to suggest some anonymity down the line – no doubt the truth will "out" eventually. Weisser's departure hasn't affected **ETC** in any way; the standard is impeccably high as per usual, managing to cover ground in-depth that few other publications would even bother to entertain. Take, for instance, Alex Tsiknias' lengthy dissertation on 'Nico Giraldi', an evolving policeman character to appear in several Italian action films. In the spirit of a *Serpico*, Giraldi (played by Tomas Milian) appeared first in Bruno Corbucci's **The Cop in Blue Jeans** [1976] and continued to appear, movie after movie, right through to the cut-and-paste **Cop in Drag** [1984], a hastily assembled vehicle which incorporates sequences from earlier outings and sees the cop having gained something in excess of 30 pounds.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA (No. 12.)
[details as above]

Interviews with Joe D'Amato and Brett Halsey (Halsey has appeared in several Fulci movies and some Spaghetti westerns). Lengthy reviews of Hans Geissendorfer's *Jonathan*, Franco's *The Sadist of Notre Dame*, The Erotic Rites of *Frankenstein* and *Nights of Tireless Sex*, Renato Polselli's *Delirium*, Giovanni

Simonelli's *Hansel and Gretel* ("Giovanni Simonelli is mainly known for scripting Action films and comedies, so it should come as no surprise that when it comes to making a horror film, he hasn't got a fucking clue") and a gaggle of others. Great.

BLACKEST HEART (No. 3, 108pp, 17.)
Shawn Smith, 1275 Washington Ave. #380,
San Leandro, CA 94577, USA

"Here we go again: another year and another **Fangoria** convention to take over and terrorise." Ooh, don't spare the horses, boys. It doesn't matter how much beer you claim to swill or how hard and savvy you purport to be, if you're going to spend your time at Fango conventions – a la the **Blackest Heart** editorial team – you're going to lose friends in the real world. Should there be any doubting the... er... fatness of the **Blackest Heart** editors, then check out the dozen-or-more photographs of them scattered throughout issue No. 3 (which stresses "Extreme Hatred" on its front cover while 'appreciative' articles on the likes of Chas Balun, Dario Argento and Tom Savini appear within). The emphasis is on horror movies, throwing in some cussing, a lot of hot air, some porn product and short fiction. There is a *Bitch of the Month*

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section (a kind of Readers Girlfriends with a possible \$100 for the best crotch shot sent in) and a Personal Shitlist which includes the obvious suspects. Jack Valenti, Fangoria and MTV (talk about bedroom angst...). However welcome it is to see something which makes no bones about being Political Incorrect, **Blackest Heart** doesn't ring true. If you want chicks with "spread lips" go read **Hustler** (the pictures are in colour); if you want drawings of people taking a shit, get someone who can draw. Better still, cut the shit altogether and don't let the attitude get in the way of a good story. (The Crow is "a motherfucking, near perfect, cinematic masterpiece", but looks like "some of the violence and gore had been cut in certain scenes". Badass!)

SECRET MAGAZINE [No.8, 92pp, £10.]
PO Box 1400, 1000 Brussels 1, Belgium

"When do you become aware of an inclination for fetishism?" That is the question asked by 'André of Belgium' in **Secret Magazine**, accompanied by a picture of himself totally encased in an inflated rubber suit, submersed in a tub of water. "I would like to know if there are any other readers out there who live this particular fetishism, and how?" He's even giving a thumbs up to the camera (though he can't see where it is, unless he is peering through the breathing hole in his head mask). If "fetishism" seems a million light years from home, take a look at some of the fetish photography of Todd Friedman elsewhere in the same issue. That rubber clad blond, cute isn't she? Printed on high gloss paper, the eighth English language edition of **Secret** also features an interview with Sleep Chamber; aquabondage; enema - a beginner's guide ("Why did the enema suddenly disappear in Europe...?"); and practical tips for looking after your fetish wear. Even to those with no interest in the 'scene', **Secret** rarely fails to deliver something of interest. This issue it's a curious tirade on crucifixion which - despite the insistence that crucifixion "has NO place in the SM world" - almost lovingly traces, blow-by-blow, what it must be like to die on the cross (like the King of the Jews). "He tries to support himself on the nails driven into the flesh and bones of his feet and to straighten himself up, so lightening the weight hanging from his arms."

DESIRE [No.7, 100pp, £3.50.]

Red Sky Publishing, 192 Clapham High St., London, SW4 7UD



Glossy and full-colour throughout, **Desire** has the veneer of a topshelf stroke mag but with a more literate sensibility. Billing itself as "Sex & sensuality for women & men",

to date **Desire** have carried - alongside tasteful photography and risqué adverts - articles on shoe fetishism, the

Marquis de Sade, body piercing, 'perversion', the pleasures of porn, sex toys, a regular 'censorship watch' column and contact page.

CELEBRATE THE SELF NEWSLETTER

[vol.III No.3, 20pp, £2.95.]

PO Box 8888, Mobile, Alabama 36689, USA

This lively, bimonthly magazine is devoted to every facet of male masturbation, offering "how to" techniques, advice, book, video and product reviews, and plenty of other stuff. It's perhaps a little odd that a publication devoted to solo sex has such a heavy leaning towards the homosexual (the reviews, the illustrations and the readership are decidedly of the male-to-male persuasion)... or maybe heterosexual men aren't quite as devoted in the penis pulling department?



Whatever, **Celebrate the Self** will prove of interest to everyone. Vol.III No.3 has one boy's reminiscences on his father, how he fantasised and dearly wanted to climb into bed with him for mutual masturbation. ("He died quite suddenly at 57, still fit and handsome.") Also discussed is 'Sex and Your Health' which takes the common Agony Aunt into some rather exotic locations. For instance, with regard to men who have lost their testicles to injury and have had them replaced with silicone gel-filled imitations, is there any chance of the gel eventually leaking from the capsules and migrating to other parts of the body? (Answer: there are not enough men with long-term implants to be certain either way.) Is it safe to achieve orgasm by use of a catheter, asks one man, after a urethral stricture has left the insertion of a soft rubber tube down his penis the only means of relieving his bladder, but often stimulating him to "uncontrollable ejaculation" at the same time? (Answer: Apparently it's safe, so long as the catheter is sterilised and inserted gently.) Possibly the most 'entertaining' aspect of **Celebrate the Self** are the Readers' Solo Sex Techniques pages. Here, one can discover the myriad weird and wonderful ways other men manipulate their genitals and psyche; everything from jacking off behind the wheel of a car on the way

home from work, to one unfortunate who injected water down the head of his penis but overdid it with the disinfectant and had to go to hospital with a "burning" bladder.

CONTRITION [No.1, 14pp, free to contributors.]

Lives of the Secular Saints, BM Judgement, London, WC1N 3XX

The aim of **Contrition**, as specified in a note at the back of the thing, is to eventually have generated enough money to be able to "erect a statue to the Marquis de Sade, in fulfilment of Swinburne's prophecy". This is the first issue, not for sale, but free to contributors. The manifesto is Pain and readers are requested to send in "pain-words" so that they might be preserved in writing. These can concern anything from sub-dom games to bloodsports to golden showers. Of course, no real names are involved (in fact, no names at all - you have to study the pieces themselves to figure whether the author is male or female), and the writing itself ranges from the good to the 'confusing'. While some of the tales are relatively innocuous (one opens with "The image etched on my mind from the evening with Jill, Harry and Lisa is when we finally got 'round to pissing on Jill'"), others, such as the penultimate piece in this issue No.1, builds up to become quite a vicious piece of work. "She'd been watching intently to learn how to use a scalpel on me... The man in the middle had his subject lying face up. He used an industrial stapler to shoot staples into his nipples. Each one made the man's body jolt as though hit by an electric current. He moved down to his genitals, wrapped the scrotal sac around the penis and then stapled it closed, feminised, like an infibulated cunt." Single sheets of A4 with staples running down one-side.

TRASH CITY [No.16/17 £2.50.]

34 Perran Rd, Tulse Hill, London, SW2 3DL

The latest perfect-bound double issue opens with a guide to Paris, in which the authors of the piece spend much of their time watching smut in dodgy cinemas. ("I still feel a great sense of guilt about insisting that Jim come to a Parisian porno cinema with me. I should have known better, having visited the same dubious establishment with friends a couple of years before, while even more drunk. Being more inebriated on that occasion, and having had the strength of safety-in-numbers had probably blinded me to the cinema's truly sordid nature.") Also included are editor Jim McLennan's attempts at getting an interview (at the very least some answers) out of David Alton MP with regard his "policy" on videos. After some trying and receipt of form letters, McLennan eventually gets through to Alton's personal assistant on the phone. She requests background details on McLennan's previous work and the intended publication should the MP grant an interview in this instance. Naturally, divulgence of such facts puts paid to any interview. There is a manga roundup, a user's guide to top-shelf material, and Brown's - a strip club in London. Enough to keep most purveyors of the outré entertained for a night or two. It wouldn't hurt none to lose the weird

word news clippings, however (sources aren't identified, or dated, making their presence even more frustrating). And the pieces ought to be mixed immediately (it means nothing to the majority of readers). Those qualms aside, on the whole an enjoyable read reflecting a concerted effort to go for something different.

CHILDREN OF A FAR GREATER GOD

[No. 5, 28pp, £1.50.]

Mike Wood, Flat 3, 89 Saltram Cres., London, W9 3JS

Mike Wood returns with his appreciation of the sitcom *Married... With Children*. Issue No. 5 has coverage of the Bundys in England episodes; episode guides for Seasons 5 and 6 (just in case); gossip; reviews; and a reprint of *Mad* magazine's review, titled 'Buried... With Children' (Seems a little odd that there should be a lampooning of a show which is itself a lampoon). Also featured is an interesting essay by David Fisher on how the 'dysfunctional family' is becoming increasingly categorised as appealing to teenagers. Wood is also planning a zine devoted entirely to reviewing smut, tentatively titled at this early stage *The XXX Files*. Keep your eyes peeled, it promises to be a goody.

SHOCK CINEMA [No. 7, 52pp, \$4.]

Steve Puchalski, PO Box 518,

John Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009, USA

It's a little unsettling when a magazine which supposedly comes out on a yearly basis has a new issue up for review with every *Headpress*. *Shock Cinema* No. 7 kicks off with the regular Film Flotsam, in which other zine editors detail their 'favourite' movies, then shifts into editor Steve Puchalski's own Four Star Favourites before hitting the Review section proper. Here can be found such diverse gems as Johnny Cash! The Man, His World, His Music; Pony Girl starring Traci Lords; and Ted ('I Got a Woman') Bohus' Vampire Vixens From Venus. Puchalski doesn't bestow the films with capsule comments, good or bad they are deemed worthy of extensive commentary. Pretty funny, too. He says of the docu-drama, *Amin: The Rise and Fall*: 'Though director Sharad Patel is an inept hack, what makes this film a must-see is the mind-boggling lead performance from Joseph Olita, who can barely pronounce his lines, has an ego slightly larger than his ass, and (from the look at the grotesque gut hanging over his belt) hasn't taken a dump since the 60s.' [See ad elsewhere this issue for details on Steve's *Slimetime* book coming soon from *Headpress*.]

FILM THREAT VIDEO GUIDE

[No. 13, 92pp, \$4.95/£4.]

PO Box 3170, Los Angeles, CA 90078-3170, USA

Following consternation in *Headpress* 10 that FTVG might have bitten the big one, editor-in-chief Dave E. Williams wrote in to set the record straight: 'While it is no secret that I personally have been difficult to reach, the magazine is in no danger of folding. I have heard this curious rumour before and have to wonder where it came from. Ah well, I suppose it's just wishful thinking on someone's part.' The letter



was accompanied by FTVG No. 13, the Special Documentary Issue, featuring news of Alex Crawford's behind-the-scenes look at *Porn*; Vikram Jayanti and John Powers' *I Am A Sex Addict*; Marq Morrison's *Dammit Jim, I'm Only A Documentary* (a 'Spockumentary' about Trekkies) and lotsa reviews of tapes you'll probably never get to see in Britain (with the exception of Terry Zwigoff's Robert Crumb documentary – the only film in years over which the *Headpress* staff have ejaculated in anticipation). Film Threat Video Guide is the source for independent film productions. (So widespread is the rumour of FTVG's demise that and official letter has since been circulated by the magazine putting the record straight.)

ANSWER ME! [No. 4, 132pp, \$5, age statement reqd.]

Goad to Hell Enterprises, PO Box 31009, Portland, Oregon 97231, USA

'How many rapists does it take to screw in a light bulb? Only one but they prefer soda bottles.' If you're not familiar with *ANSWER ME!* magazine, issue No. 4 might not be a good place to start. While card carrying journalists may be able to get away with handling inflammatory subject matter in a biased and manipulative way, the more volatile the subject the more the reporter will endeavour to air their own disdain. When it comes to child abuse, rape, etc, objectivity comes to a dead halt. There is rarely – if ever – any ambiguity over the fact that the reporter regards such crimes as EVIL and the perpetrators as SCUM. The difference with *ANSWER ME!* is that it skips around such unwritten legislation. More than with previous issues, the editorial stand in No. 4 is ambiguous. With such a sensitive subject as rape – the theme here – the lack of 100% denunciation is generally being construed as pro rape, advocating rape, whatever. Reading the magazine (not just lifting



from it tidbits), it is clear that this is not the case. The 'meat' of No. 4 is 'Rapeworld', a 40 article looking at all aspects of physical subjugation, be it rape in war time, the case of juvenile offenders, gangbanging, serial rapists, incest, rape in marriage, nuns as victims of rape, little girls, little boys, the retarded, scoutmasters who are rapists, doctors who are rapists, holy men who are rapists, cops who are rapists, ad nauseum. ('But last year, in a move admirable for its ovarian audacity alone, University of Maryland art teacher Josephine Withers and her female pupils designed a billboard with the headline POTENTIAL RAPISTS. The rest of the billboard consisted of a list of the school's 16,000 male students. Angry 'potential rapists' responded with picket signs reading, WITHERS MIGHT BE A WHORE.' From the section on campus rape.) Jim and Debbie Goad actively seek to deconstruct notions of 'taste'. The centrespread is a rape board game (by Mike Diana). The cover has a painting of a waitress with a bruised eye wearing a badge saying 'Hi! I asked for it' and carrying a hot-dog smeared with mustard formulating the word RAPE. In one article, the Goads detail how they assumed pseudonyms to create an anti-ANSWER ME! zine and distributed it in the small press arena. The editors of *Chocolate Impulse* (the 'fake' zine) were stereotypical lesbians (stereotypical interracial lesbians, no less, living an 'alternative' lifestyle) and the target of their hate – as well as the Goads – were stereotypical villains like Rednecks. And men in general. Reaction to *Chocolate Impulse* (mainly from men) was unequivocally positive. Say the Goads: 'The most significant thing about Faith Impulse and Valerie Chocolate, no matter how absurdly we depicted their lives, was that NO ZINESTERS QUESTIONED WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE FOR REAL. Everyone believed that Faith and Val were the shit. EVERYONE.' By the same token, no one questions whether or not Jim and Debbie Goad are for real, simply taking everything as it comes. Also included in this issue is 'Quality Time', an excerpt from Peter Sotos' forthcoming novel *Tool*; Adam Parfrey's dissection of that feminist fascist Andrea Dworkin (which is reprinted in the Feral House *Cult Rapture* book, preceded by a note from Parfrey apologising for his 'uniformed equation of feminism with Dworkin's hysterical propaganda'); 'Anal Date Rape' a comic strip in the manner of Trina Robbins by Molly Kiely; and too many rants by Debbie Goad ('I'm A Piece Of Shit', 'He Tried To Fuck Me', 'I'm On The Rag', 'Smiles Are Evil', 'Chicks Make Me Nervous'). It will be interesting to see what the Goads come up with next.

Also received: MENG & ECKER [NO 9, 72PP, £2.95. SAVOY, 279 DEANGATE, MANCHESTER, M3 4EW] Lord Horror's Creep Boys in 'Meng's Daughter'. RANSOM NOTE GRAPHICS [PO BOX 13314, OAKLAND, CA 95661, USA] T-shirt catalogue should you want 'Women of the SS' or 'Support the Death Penalty' emblazoned across your chest. LIGHT'S LIST 1995 [£1.00 +

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A5 SAE. JOHN LIGHT, THE LIGHT HOUSE, 29 LONGFIELD ROAD, TRING, HERTS, HP23 4DG] Literary magazines for readers and writers, containing something like 600 contacts for publications dealing in prose/poetry/art. OX [NO 21, 96PP, DM 6.90, PO BOX 14 34 45, D-45264 ESSEN, GERMANY] The German equivalent of **MaximumRocknRoll**, but in German. However, each issue comes with a pretty cool CD compilation of bands the world over. **WEIRD FLOWER** [NO 6, 52pp, £7 JIM MCMARTIN, PO BOX 366, STATION 'B', TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5T 2W2, CANADA] At first glance a rather messy and overwrought item. But underneath, a whole gamut of interesting stuff. Interview with some guy who put bill posters up denouncing the imminent performance of the Circus Archaos in his town; subliminal messages on TV, in movies and self-help tapes; backward masking; strange stuff falling out of the sky; a retrospective of the **Planet of the Apes** movies, and... the Flat Earth Society! **DELIRIUM: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO DELIRIOUS CINEMA** [NO 3, 56PP, £3.95, FIRST FLOOR, 14 THORPE DALE ROAD, LONDON, N4 3BL] With its eye to Italian cinema, the latest **Delirium** covers the year 1980 and – no messing about – 'simply' features full cast and credit details on over 50 films, with reviews for nearly all of them. We know that editor Adrian Smith has been compiling this list for years and **Delirium** will undoubtedly come together to prove an invaluable sourcing tool for all budding film librarians. The kind of retentiveness we like here at **Headpress**.

BOOKS

ANSWER ME! THE FIRST THREE

[320pp, \$13. AK Press]

PO Box 31009, Portland, Oregon 97231, USA

This is a collection of the now out-of-print first three issues of **ANSWER Me!** magazine, reprinted here page for page. Contents include interviews with Russ Meyer, Holly Woodlawn, Anton LaVey, David Duke, Al Goldstein, Gato Boys, Ray Dennis Steckler, Jack Kevorkian, Al Sharpton, and Renato Corazzo (one of the

six official NAMBLA spokespersons). Articles include '24 Hours On Sunset' (in which the Goads allocate one complete day to driving up and down the same street), 'Ho Chi Minh's Revenge: Vietnamese Gangs in America', a conversation on the Suicide Hotline, and the monumental '100 Spectacular Suicides' and '100 Mass-Murdering/Serial-Killing Stars'. If you haven't already got the original magazines, hunt this volume down. [May still be obtainable through some British outlets at £10.95.]

VICE ART: AN ANTHOLOGY OF LONDON'S

PROSTITUTE CARDS Patrick Jewell [64pp]

Broadwater House, 30 Park Parade, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 5AG.

This slim volume takes to the telephone booths of Britain's capitol in search of the more visually arresting calling cards scattered therein – those brightly coloured invitations for sex, courtesy of a pen & ink drawing, a few descriptive words and a telephone number (numbers are deleted from the book so you don't get no ideas). The haul has been divided into several general types: 'Straight', 'Domination', 'Submission', 'Fantasies and Uniforms', 'Specialist Services' and so forth. The emphasis is primarily on the reproduction of the cards themselves, though accompanying text – often a single paragraph per chapter – does provide an interesting counterpoint to the images. Equally as interesting and as brief is the opening piece on the history of prostitute cards, putting their origins in Eighteenth Century contact ads appearing in such periodicals as **The Harris List of Covent Garden Ladies** and **The Rangers Magazine**. The scope of the collection is surprisingly great: the cards are pretty wild, too, not just the stockings and high heel brigade. Imagine, if you will, sharing an afternoon with **MADAME NIAGRA! – WATERSPORTS**; hear the call of **NEW BITCH IN TOWN – REPORT NOW**; and **EXPECT NO SCHOOL DINNERS HERE... ONLY LASHINGS OF DISCIPLINE**. If the brevity of text is a disappointment, the major flaw with **Vice Art** lies with the reproduction of the cards themselves. They seem to have been squeezed through a computer, rendered 'blocky' in appearance.

CRANKED UP REALLY HIGH Stewart Home

[124pp, £5.95]

Codex, PO Box 148, Hove, BN3 3DQ

It might be central to his book, but disregard Stewart Home's inference that Punk Rock is indebted to the Situationist International and you'll enjoy **Cranked Up Really High** a lot more. (Try to ignore the pictures of him, too, circled, on the front and back covers.) This is a history of Punk as a musical phenomenon, which charts its nebulous origins in the mid-Seventies through to Riot Grrrrs of the Nineties, the "penultimate transformation" of the genre. Not an A to Z discourse, however. Home doesn't regard the Sex Pistols as true Punk, more of a pub Rock band and 'Anarchy In The UK' as "a novelty record in the tradition of Donovan's 'Atlantis'". Acknowledging other mainstays in a similarly irreverent manner (though with regard to

cuntpunks the Clash, deservedly so), Home is predominantly concerned with the lesser documented aspects of the Punk scene, such as fanzines and his own record collection. There is an evaluation of the many Punk cover versions of that R&B standard, 'Louie Louie'. Finnish punk bands get a fair mention, and a retracing of Oi! music and Nazi bonehead bands (Skrewdriver get a whole chapter) all go to push **Cranked Up Really High** ahead of the usual discourses on Punk Rock. Despite at times reading like a personal attack on Greil Marcus (who's book **Lipstick Traces**, Home does not like), **Cranked Up Really High** is a refreshing and – situationism aside – enjoyable read.

BIZARRE CINEMA! Sexploitation

FILMMAKERS EDITED Riccardo Morracchi &

Stefano Piselli [160pp, Glittering Images]

This large-format, full-colour, glossy, coffee table-type volume is divided into chapters on Russ Meyer, Dave Friedman, H.G. Lewis, Doris Wishman, Harry Novak, R.L. Frost, and A.C. Stephens, and features plenty of cheesecake photos from many of their films. The text is in French, Italian and English but there isn't much of it so don't lose any sleep. (Frost gets a paragraph! – It must have been difficult to find so little to write.) A good proportion of the stills and posters have never been seen before and to find them together in one place is quite mind-boggling. However, whether any picture book (of 160 pages, no less) is worth such a steep asking price is another matter entirely (in Britain, copies are around the £40 mark).

CULT RAPTURE Edited by Adam Parfrey

[256PP, £11.99, Feral House]

Distributed in the UK by Turnaround

Eight years after Parfrey's seminal **Apocalypse Culture** comes this, the eagerly awaited follow-up tome. The 1989 **Rants and Incendiary Tracts** (co-edited by Bob Black) was but a pot-boiler, **Cult Rapture** is the real McCoy. Part of the success of **Apocalypse Culture** lay in the fact that it compiled/represented a shift in journalistic perspective, at a time when there was a conscious shift of polarities, something in the air, winds of change, whatever. At worst the book gave a label to a 'movement' and a whole slurry of 'like-minded' individuals jumped on board with their weird world views. Thing is, the weirdness in **Apocalypse Culture** isn't so much the subject matter, more that everything together generates its own inherent weirdness – something which many of the **Apocalypse Revisionists** miss completely while plowing merrily into their tales of serial killers. Now, almost a decade having flowed under the bridge, **Cult Rapture** has a lot of apocalyptic competition to contend with. Parfrey hasn't been resting on his laurels, however. **Cult Rapture** plunges the reader headfirst into seemingly still waters, only to reveal the Della Falls once inside. Here is the sorry saga of Walter Keane who made a fortune with paintings of big-eyed waifs, until that is, his estranged wife Margaret claimed she was the real artist behind the pictures and



LEVELS Observation on a work Simon Strong

first published in Spring 1955 by the Paris Olympia Press as No 9 in the Traveller's Companion Series. I consider it to be a spectacular example

The genre of literary erotica is the oldest of all genres and, contrary to received wisdom, one of the most diverse. It finds room within itself for a number of sub-genres whose unconventionalities would entail their exclusion from other genres even if their subject matter were completely typical – for example, the Space Opera. The genre is not generally classed as science fiction whereas De Sade's *120 Days of Sodom* is a seminal work of erotica despite being idiosyncratic to the point of unreadability! I believe this generosity of classification arises as a result of its parameters shifting constantly due to sociological mores – the formulae which govern the construction of current works were forged in the abortive sexual revolution of the 1960s but works that predate these discoveries can be borne by the genre through its immense popularity. The works of De Sade and De La Bretonne are marketed to the same audience at equivalent prices as contemporary works, unlike the Horror section or Wells in Science Fiction. Interestingly enough, the Crime genre does share some of these properties: witness the perennial Agatha Christie (though preferably not, given the relentless tedium) but these sales are weighted by the influences of an ageing population and disillusioned foreign tourists. I believe that the formulae which currently govern erotica were profoundly influenced by the publishing operations in New York and London following extensive research performed by his Paris operation. This presents us with an interesting conundrum: was it during the time that these rules were in development that the classics of the genre were created? By this I am in no way disparaging the work of the genre, which produced many fine works that are now neglected most unfairly.

Author: The story of Maurice Girodias and the Olympia Press is one of the most bizarre and flamboyant in publishing history. It's also one of the most oft repeated (James Joyce and USA, with its obscenity trials, is a close second). The first sentence of this paragraph and the remainder of this section are lifted from the jacket blurb of John de Lancie's accessible biography of Girodias and the Olympia Press, *The Good Ship Venus* (Hutchinson, 1994).

[illegible]

in shabby post-war Paris. Grodias recruited a lively crew of starving but talented British and American writers to pump out the porn that financed the literary list. He was navigating between the French vice squad and financial disaster. Grodias and his writers set off on voyages through seedy back street offices, glittering parties, belly dancing, law courts, and one another's beds. The practical flavour of *The Good Ship Venus* was reflected in its skipper's business practices, which led to legendary international law courts, and one another's beds. The practical flavour of *The Good Ship Venus* was reflected in its skipper's business practices, which led to legendary international law courts, and one another's beds. The practical flavour of *The Good Ship Venus* was reflected in its skipper's business practices, which led to legendary international law courts, and one another's beds.

During this time he defied the censors to publish five of the landmark novels of the Twentieth Century. But, as censorship crumbled, his empire

The *Whip Angels* is very unusual amongst fiction in that it carries no author identification whatsoever, not even the word 'anonymous'. On the title page the name would be expected is the cipher 'x x x'. This is generally thought as being a pseudonym and is so referred in Patrick Kearney's excellent biography (Black Spring, 1987) and in John de St Siorre's book. I do not believe this to be the case, for although there are precedents in the genre for acknowledging authorship only on the title page, I find it strange that the pseudonym is not given in the publisher's catalogue on the verso of this page. It is my belief that the 'x x x' was actually a typesetter's reminder to insert matter here which was subsequently forgotten and not erased from the proofs, if there were any. In the book, it has to be said, there are even more significant typographical errors.

Paradoxically, while confusion reigns as to the identity of the correct pseudonym, there is no such confusion as to the identity of the actual author. According to both the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Encyclopedia Americana*, above, *The Whip Angels* was written by Diane Bataille, wife of no other than Georges Bataille, this century's principal theorist of erotica.

There can be no doubt that *The Whip Angels* is one of the great titles of all time. To continue the metaphor of the first section, it is to erotica what Guy N. de Maupassant is to the Horror genre.

The Preface The tone of this piece is very different to the body of the text, which is in the form of a diary. I think it highly (say 40%) possible that this piece was actually written by Georges Bataille himself, probably in French and translated by Mrs Bataille, lending it a consistency of style. The purpose of this section seems to be to make the reader aware of the author's knowledge of certain shortcomings in the main text. The explanations which are provided for these are certainly not convincing, let alone complete.

The Deflowerment Scene Probably the most obvious 'flaw' in the book is the most crucial scene in the book – Victoria's deflowerment. The chapter begins convincingly enough with lots of melodramatic fate-worse-than-death stuff and a reference to the long pink corset being 'soaked and bloodstained'. This is the most direct reference to Poor little Vicki's hymen in the whole work! Which is peculiar considering her maidenhood is the book's McCuffin. At the moment she is 'taken' by Kenneth, she faints dead away, whether this is before, after or during the crucial moments is not clear, in any case there is no mention whatsoever of any physically unpleasant residue. The only explanation I can offer is that the book was written at a time when the taboo of virginity was waning in influence, and that the deflowerment scene, long a staple of erotica, was perceived as out-dated. Anyway, the value of the deflowerment motif is no longer negotiable and most decent erotica now features at least one good scene at some point.

Another odd thing about the book is the preponderance of strange and sadistic sexware: corsets with pointy whalebones, huge dildos, kiftens, snakes etc. Given all this, there seems strangely little emphasis on whips.

The *Whip Angels* is back in print courtesy of Creation Books and their new erotic imprint, Velvet. Other titles in the Velvet series include: De Sade's *Philosophy in the Boudoir* ("I shall rip out her pubic hairs and lacerate her thighs with pincers"), Pierre Louÿs's *The She Devils* ("It excites me to have my asshole licked out by my daughters"), Jeremy Reed's *The Pleasure Château* (There were cows crossing the road ahead, but blundery shapes being taken in for the night), Guillaume Apollinaire's *Flesh Unlimited* ("After this I buried my nose in her cunt which smelt of egg – due to her recent discharge – and of piss"), and Pan Pantiarka's *House of Pain* ("I can't fucking believe it, half dead and he's turned on, too dead to fuck but that's what he's got going on in his head").

things got real sour real fast. Several hours with I CAN, a motley crew of sex-obsessed cripples (*The girl was 13 years old? We just gave her information. I never laid a hand on her*). Russian brides by Mail Order (*"SAY HELLO! SAY HELLO! FRIEND DOWNSTAIRS HELLO!"*). The Ginger Alden Fan Club, Alden being the girlfriend who last saw Elvis alive (*Finally I could deny my feelings no longer*). Waco and the Oklahoma City bombing. From start to finish *Cult Rapture* makes for compulsive, electric reading.

BENEATH THE UNDERGROUND. *Bob Black*
(190pp, \$10.95, Feral House)

Discussing the small press work of Jim Wheat in *Beneath the Underground*, author Bob Black writes on page 115: "There are collages, reviews of bogus books and films, 'fictionary' definitions, Escheresque crossword puzzles, false ads, spurious quotations and the as yet nameless practice of rearranging clipped-out words, as is done in ransom notes." It is necessary to read the passage over again, and later the pages immediately preceding it and those which follow, so

incredulous will you be of the fact that Black refers to a "nameless practice" and makes no move to shape a name himself and add it to his lexicon – as with "The Marginals Milieu", the Blackism for the zine subculture, and the "focus" of this book. No bones are made about **Beneath the Underground** being an opinionated odyssey through the (largely American) Underground press, but don't expect that forewarning to make the journey any more accessible. So opinionated and self-loving is Black that the book reads like a parody, but neither a good nor very funny one. Black accuses other small press writers of bias and favouritism, then, following a thorough lambasting of cartoonist Ace Backwards, reprints an early Backwards' cartoon which would seem to be taking the piss out of Bob Black. The introduction, by one Dr Kirby Olson, is nothing short of a literary blow-job with Olson likening Black's writings to that of Oscar Wilde's. Not that Black can allow Olson to conclude the introduction without interjecting his own fabulous comments (a total of four in as many pages). Later in the book Black himself is interviewed by a guest writer who enthuses over his work.

When Black calls Mike Hoy, proprietor of Loompanics, an "avowed egoist", you know that by Black's standards the guy must have a seriously sized head.

THE MISTRESS AND THE SLAVE. *Ann.*

[160pp, £19.95, Delectus]

Delectus Books, Dept MS, 27 Old Gloucester St.,
London, WC1N 1EX

A 1905 facsimile reprint by that good old stalwart the anonymous author. It concerns Parisian aristocrat George who



is terrorised away from masturbation by his doctor, and the fear of using his hand remains with him. As an adult, and married with children, he meets Anna, a whore who will only masturbate him. At first this hands-on approach pains and terrifies him, but he develops an irresistible urge to return to Anna and succumb to her domination. She turns out to be a scheming street-girl who desires only his wealth and his blood. The bizarre relationship culminates in George's tortured death at the hands of Anna and her maids equipped with burning wads of cottonwool and a large Spanish Fly-coated dildo. Anna also puts her long-nailed finger to a searingly painful use. A strange combination of sex and ruthless nastiness that is sadistic and unpleasant enough to make you put it down occasionally.

MODERN SLAVES. A PROFOUND STUDY OF THE FORCES OF DESTINY *Claire Willows* [288pp, £19.95. Delectus]

Another facsimile reprint, this time from 1931. A young American girl is sent across the Atlantic to stay with her English uncle. Instead of finding her relative she ends up in a Scottish house of correction. There she is taught to obey without question or hesitation and is eventually sold off as a slave and maid to a wealthy Lady for many more bottom-spanking adventures.

WHITE STAINS *Anais Nin & Friends* [220pp, £19.95. Delectus]

Not the long lost Aleister Crowley tome of the same name, instead a collection of six short stories apparently commissioned by jaded oil tycoon Roy M. Johnson. The stories are unrelated and vary in quality. Some are quite poetic, while others read like scripts from contemporary porn movies: "I am a woman now, and a man is fucking me! His hard prick is actually in my cunt, and this delicious sensation which I feel as he pushes and thrusts is from his big, loving prick fucking my cunt." The best part, however, comes in the form of a bygone sex guide titled



'Love's Encyclopedia'. Comprising almost 70 pages it describes, amongst various other things, the sexual organs for those lacking in intimate knowledge. Of the penis it explains "It becomes stiff and hard resembling a broom handle and reaches a size from about four inches to eight inches ordinarily... some African savages have pricks as thick as an arm and about 15 inches long." And "The woman's sexual parts are composed of a slit... this slit begins at the bottom of the belly [and] terminates near the arse hole... The slit of the woman and all the organs together is called the cunt..." Perhaps not overly academic but fun to read, nonetheless.

PSYCHIC DICTATORSHIP IN THE USA *Alex Constantine* [222p, £12.95. Feral House]



A mindbending conspiracy document. Either Constantine is a hopeless paranoid delusive (he believes himself to be a target of the CIA's non-lethal warfare) or he is supplying us with true and potentially devastating information. Which ever option, this book is a fascinating read. It concerns government funded experiments into methods of remote brain control. Microchip implants which can control or influence human behaviour. Microwave and RF bombardments can erase the memory banks of the brain leaving them ready for message insertion. Messages can be transmitted to unwary puppets instructing them to sleep, eat, or kill. When apprehended and interrogated, the general explanation for their irrational behaviour is "the voices in my head told me to do it". Any update could now include the assassination of President Rabin, shot dead by Yigal Amir who claimed it was the voice of God that guided him. Also includes a section of Satanic cults and paedophiles, The Children of God and its alleged involvement in the death of River Phoenix, and the brain-damaging threat of the widely used artificial sweetener aspartame,

aka NutraSweet. Constantine's research is in-depth and thorough. Scary stuff, indeed.

OUTPOSTS: A CATALOG OF RARE AND DISTURBING ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION

Russ Kick
[264pp, \$18.95. Carroll & Graf]

A wonderful sourcebook for all manner of delightful literature (plus a few videos and CD ROMs) from society's great and dark underbelly. Unlike, say, *Amok Fourth Despatch* and the *Loompanics Unlimited* catalogues, *Outposts* isn't trying to sell anything - Mr Kick has no vested interest in any of the items he puts up for review, hence *Outposts* comes over as objective and, ultimately, more plausible as a sourcing tool. Price and order details are provided should the reader decide to pursue certain titles. But then, *Outposts* in itself is an absorbing read. This wide-angled glimpse at the frayed edges of the literary world takes in everything from conspiracy theorists to art, drugs and the unexplained. While the likes of RE/Search naturally get a shout other less obvious material is also covered, such as (chosen here at random) *Animalscam: The Beastly Abuse of Human Rights* (a book whose basic premise is that the animal rights movement is "aimed at destroying the rights of humans by eliminating clothing, food, animal companions and entertainment..."), and *The Immortal Cells: Why Cancer Research Fails*. However wide Kick casts his gaze, there is only so much to be seen at any one given moment and, already, a second volume is planned (though let's hope the next cover isn't so ugly). In an ideal world, *Outposts* would run for a very long time indeed.

DE NIRO *John Parker* [256pp, £16.99. Gollancz]

For Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull*, Robert De Niro trained with Jake La Motta daily for six months. He flew to Florida to seek out Vicki - the second of Jake's three wives, now divorced - to garner more information on the boxer he was set to portray. The two talked, going through La Motta's turbulent marriage year by year. Almost 50 but still attractive, Vicki later said of the actor, "Bobby was so much like Jake that I just wanted to go to bed with him." De Niro, remaining in character once a movie is in production, gained 60 pounds when it came to depicting the over-the-hill boxer in later life. Despite the fact that John Parker utilises no interviews with the actor himself (not surprising, as he rarely gives any and when he does says nothing), his book *De Niro* stands as a thoroughly researched and absorbing account of the man's life, career and obsession. In walk-on roles, on auto-pilot, De Niro dominates the screen; when at his best, he overtakes the film. It isn't surprising that Scorsese chose not to give him the role of Jesus Christ... This is no cheap, sycophantic Greatest Hits package. If anything, the book seems to be over-compensating at times and coming down too hard on its subject. Granted, while, say, *Night and the City* is hardly an



standing movie by anyone's definition, Parker's loyalties are torn when it comes to *The King of Comedy*, the tale of psychotic wannabe comic Rupert Pupkin, who holds a talkshow host to ransom in exchange for a spot on live television. Parker calls it a masterpiece, but also "a one-line gag that is drawn out to the full five minutes with all the fun of having a wisdom tooth pulled... striking a nerve every so often, becoming more repellent as each minute passed." As with the other works under discussion, the book is imbued with some glorious anecdotes courtesy of crew members and De Niro associates. In casting *The King of Comedy*, Johnny Carson was initially set to play the mindful TV host Jerry Langford, but withdrew for fear that the role might encourage a real-life kidnap attempt. Meryl Streep pulled out because she "did not like the look of the movie at all." Robert De Niro has never quite achieved the success that many of his peers and contemporaries enjoy. It might not be in the context that film critic Pauline Kael meant it when she spoke of De Niro in *Raging Bull*, but it perfectly sums up the enigma, nonetheless: "What De Niro does in this picture isn't acting, exactly. I'm not sure what it is."

LET ME DIE IN DRAG Ed Wood Jr
[172pp, £5.99, Gorse]

Together with *DEVIL GIRLS* ("Hot road harlots on the Highway to Hell!"), *Let Me Die in Drag* marks the beginning of a prospective series of Wood Jr reprints from Gorse (who are also responsible for *The Worst! See Music*). Ed Wood Jr needs no introduction; his cinematic absurdities are famous, so too his penchant for dressing in drag on set. Not that widely known, however, is that as well as making *Plan 9 From Outer Space* and *Glenn or Glenda*, Wood also churned out countless cheap and sleazy pulp novels and contributed to



many magazines (like *Horror Sex Tales* in 1972, for which he wrote several short stories using the likely pseudonyms Dick Trent, T. G. Denver and Ann Gora). As to *Let Me Die in Drag* and *Devil Girls*, both were originally published in 1967 and while both deal in high-octane thrills, it is the former which belies the director's obsessions best. *Let Me Die in Drag* concerns incarcerated transvestite hitman, Glen Marker (who's female alter ego is Glenda Satin). Destined to fry in the chair, Glen agrees to tell his story to a prison warden in exchange for a last request: that he may be executed in full female attire. Wood's tale unfolds with an intricacy and devotion which push it beyond its humble pulp status, calling on police statements and the ruminations of the warden to compliment Glen's first person narrative. However, this all stops when it comes to female apparel: "Glenda stripped to her bra and panties, and had just taken out the long-sleeved, turtle-neck white angora slipover sweater and blue velvet skirt, along with a pink nylon slip, as the light knock came on the shack door." Required reading for Wood aficionados and thrill seekers everywhere.

RAPID EYE 3 Edited by Simon Dwyer
[256pp, £11.95, Creation Books]



There isn't much that can go wrong with *Rapid Eye*, each volume has enough activity within its covers to keep the most jaded revolutionary on the go. There is no quick and easy route out of the three volumes to date – some singular thing invariably snags the reader and pulls them under for more. With the publication of *Rapid Eye 3*, Creation have wisely seen to revising and reprinting *Rapid Eye 1* and *2*, giving the series a uniform, much more comfortable larger format (8 1/2" x 11"). It's inevitable that each new volume has the edge and seems somehow more satisfying than the last. That said, *Rapid Eye 3* is the most balanced collection of the series to date. It is a marked sweep away from the more obvious transgressive and occultual topics of previous volumes (such as body piercing and Genesis P-Orridge), underpinning its articles to the unwritten theme: 'art in reverse'. Andy Soutter takes a look at images of the Crucifixion and determines it to be the

"hottest pornographic commodity of all time", Jack Hunter investigates *Freak Film* in a more concise and satisfying way than his own book on the subject (*Inside Terradome*, see below); Stewart Home traces the history of art pranksters The K Foundation (who achieved pop chart success under the guises of KLF and JAMS – 'Doctorin' the Tardis' anyone?), Gilbert & George eschew their philosophies and the 'meaning' of their terrible art (their *WE* takes pride of place on the cover); Howard Lake analyses pornography and determines that the "ugly aesthetic" is the way forward (not an issue for contention judging the flawless clinic-cleanliness of most porn produced in the US today). Also included are interviews with William Gibson and Alan Moore. Stephen Sennitt provides an introduction to The Process Church (initially intended, from all accounts, to be a full-blown book on the subject). There is little that can be recommended as heartily as *Rapid Eye*.

EDEN EDEN EDEN Pierre Guyotat
[164pp, £7.95, Creation Books]

This infamous anti-novel is the first of Guyotat's books to receive an English translation. Published first in France in 1970 (where it was banned) and set in some apocalyptic zone of the Algerian desert during a time of civil war, *Eden Eden Eden* is extreme in every sense of the word – no less grammatically. There are nuggets to be had, for sure, if the flow-of-consciousness style doesn't get to them first.

The initial batch of a new series of film books from Creation opens with Kerekes and Slater's own *KILLING FOR CULTURE: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF DEATH FILM* [350PP, £11.95, PUB: CREATION BOOKS], the first two printings of which are now sold out, reprinted here by way of a completely revised, fully updated edition with many new illustrations.

INSIDE TERRADOME: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF FREAK FILM Jack Hunter
[256pp, £11.95, Creation Books]

An appraisal of freaks on celluloid, *Inside Terradome* includes a good percentage of true-life freak stuff. While books on real human oddities are available by the score, it comes as no surprise that it is the latter half of *Inside Terradome* – the material which is devoted to film – that holds the most interest. Here, Hunter compiles instances of freaks and geeks in the cinema, from the early days of exploitation, through to hardcore porn (*Freak Sex*, *Edward Penishands*) and instances of body modification and self-mutilation. Each chapter ends with several pages of illustrations. *Inside Terradome* casts its net far and wide, but the dictum isn't altogether clear. The correlation of material, while esoteric, fails to include what might be seen as rather obvious examples of Freak cinema (*The Evil That Men Do*, *For Your Height Only*, *The Amazing Mister No Legs*, for instance). And what of that Modern Prometheus, that man-made surgical anomaly, Michael Jackson? An interesting read but, naggingly, one which ultimately leaves the reader feeling that the subject matter has

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sacrificed the original intent of *Freak Film* somewhat.

DEATHTRIPPING: THE CINEMA OF TRANSGRESSION Jack Sargeant [252pp, £11.95, Creation Books]

Deathtripping is the first fully comprehensive account of the New York underground film movement, its pre-history, development and principle players. Emerging in the late-Seventies, the Cinema of Transgression took Punk attitude on a course which was removed but at the same time inexorably intertwined with the music scene; sometimes 'inspired' by the music, sometimes 'illustrating' it. Principle mover, Nick Zedd, refuses to allow the movement's original idiom to be corrupted and, even today, responds to calls for a definition of the 'scene' with an articulate "Fuck you". In compiling *Deathtripping*, Jack Sargeant has spoken to most everyone associated with the hard-hitting, cheaply made and often controversial films, from original protagonists like Zedd, Beth B. (with *Salvation!*), the only one to ever make the 'big time'?, Richard Kern, Casandra Stark, Tommy Turner, through to more contemporary torch-bearers such as Todd Phillips and Richard Baylor. He also provides a fascinating bird's eye view of the whole arena, complementing his interviews with filmographies, film storylines (where applicable), priceless anecdotes and conflicts. Why no one has undertaken such a book sooner is a mystery, the strange world of the Cinema of Transgression is a subject which has begged exploration for years. That said, there is satisfaction in knowing that *Deathtripping* covers every base – there isn't any more anyone need know about Transgression after this. *Deathtripping* is the first and the last word on the subject.

A touring film programme was organised on the launch of *Deathtripping*, which brought Nick Zedd to Britain and showcased his latest film amongst other examples of Transgressive auteurism. *Headpress* caught one of the dates and laughed as the rep cinema screened *HARDCORE SEX* to a half-filled auditorium. The audience knew what to expect; the cinema staff evidently didn't. (Ironically, the private cinema club situated next door, wouldn't dare to show anything quite so filthy.) The first-half of the programme included Richard Kern's *Submit To Me Now*, Jeri Cain Rossi's *Black Hearts Bleed Red*, and Tommy Turner/David Wojnarowicz' overlong *Where Evil Dwells*. (Two of these films star Joe Coleman.) The latter half of the show consisted entirely of Zedd product, which, with the exception of *Police State*, was screened via two projectors simultaneously. The likes of *War Is Menstrual Envy* take on an entirely new perspective when viewed in this way. Seeing the hideously scarred Ray on one screen, while next to him, on the other, Kembra Pfahler looks skyward, suddenly makes an overall 'sense'. It's also a little moving in a religious experience sort of way. (The video release of this film lined the duo sequences laterally, one after another, hence the insanely lengthy and

DEATHTRIPPING



The Cinema of Transgression

dull scenes with Pfahler 'swimming underwater', etc.) *Whoregasm* consisted of a really cheap, down 'n' dirty Seventies porn loop and various cut-up images, some of which 'implied' child sex (an accusation which Zedd rebutted come the Q&A session following the show). Zedd's most recent film, *Son Of A Whore*, was a disappointment. Silent, it offered, on the right, found footage of a technical engineering nature and, on the left, gay hardcore. The latter quickly gave way to surgery film. Zedd's role as filmmaker in *Son Of A Whore* extends no further than 'finding' the films and projecting them.

Also received: **CRASHCOURSE** *Wilhelmina Baird* [1] [278PP, £4.99, PUB: ROC] A novel involving the Virtual Reality cinema thrills of the future but with the added bonus that the viewer feels whatever's happening. **PAINFUL PLEASURES** *Anon* [284PP, £19.95, PUB: DELECTUS BOOKS] Another exquisitely produced hardback volume from the Delectus stable of erotica. In this instance, a reproduction of short stories and letters originally published as a limited edition in 1931, on the themes of corporal punishment and disciplinary programmes. Contains an introduction on the history of Gargoyle Press. **A259 MULTIPLEX BOMB "OUTRAGE"** *Simon Strong* [100PP, £5.95, PUB: CODEX, ADDRESS AS CRANKED UP REALLY HIGH] A novel with schematic diagrams, a crinkle cut narrative and a chapter in French. All of which is counterpointed by some 'laddish' behaviour. Answers on a postcard, please. **INTERREGNUM** *Geraldine Monk* [£7.95, PUB: CREATION BOOKS] Pendle Hill and witch trials are the centre of this new work of Rorschach word-play by the Lancashire poet. **CATAMANIA: THE DISSONANCE OF FEMALE PLEASURE AND DISSENT** *Adèle Olivia Gladwell* [252PP, £7.95, PUB: CREATION BOOKS] A monumental study of the modern female voice, courtesy of explorations in film, music, philosophy, sanity and magic. **MARC ALMOND: THE LAST STAR** *Jeremy Reed* [182PP, £9.95, PUB: CREATION BOOKS] The life, work and

escapades of the free-wheeling songsmith. **DUST: A CREATION BOOKS READER** [154PP, £6.99, CREATION BOOKS] Anyone wishing to investigate Creation's literary objectives but unsure as to where to start, could do no worse than pick up a copy of *Dust*.

VIDEO

F.T.W. *d: Michael Karbelnikoff* [18 cert, Medusa]

Mickey Rourke plays an ex-jailbird who's determined to stick to the straight and narrow. He meets up with Lori Singer who's desperate to kick ass. Together they formulate this partnership of trust – while he's riding in rodeo competitions, unbeknownst to him, she is out robbing banks. Rourke plays Frank T. Wells (the F.T.W. of the title, and not, as you were probably thinking, some kind of take on NBK or an abbreviation of "Fuck The World"), engaged in a subliminal form of method acting with food or something stored in his jowls, having no more than three words to say in any given sentence. Lori Singer as Frank's wayward gal is just too clean-cut to be convincing. The shoot-outs are undertaken with a certain flair (if without much bloodshed), and the opening bank robbery shows promise. But that's as far as it gets. The promise isn't realised and the story fails to pick up and go. Says Rourke of his involvement, "I haven't done a movie in a long time that I really tried in like I did in *F.T.W.*" Next.

A WOMAN SCORNE *d: Andrew Stevens* [18 cert, Medusa]

We thought an Interplanetary Vortex a funny setting for a movie about revenge called *A Woman Scorned*, until that is the laser gun wielding Brigitte Nielsen whose magical crystal could cause havoc in the wrong hands, turned out to be nothing more than the longest trailer in history (advertising a movie as yet without a title). *A Woman Scorned* – when finally it starts – stars pretty Shannon Tweed as a deranged wife out to destroy the family she believes responsible for the suicide of her husband (a failed businessman and something of a cad, so why bother?). She worms her way into the lives of the family, who employ her as a tutor for their teenage son. She even gets to live with them (that's probable, isn't it). This is another entry in the Fatal Attraction deadlier-than-the-male cycle and owes more than a passing nod and a wink to Pasolini's *Theorem*, with Tweed seducing each member of the family in turn, even mom. Though nothing original is drawn from any of this, *A Woman Scorned* does have a greater sleaze quota than the similar *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle* and the schizoid Tweed is nice to look at. Has a wonderful 'non-ending' too. *Now Terminal Force

MIND RIPPER *d: Jonathan Craven* [18 cert, Medusa]

Here's a monster romper directed by Jonathan Craven (though not credited as such on the box), bearing the sanctification of his more famous father, Wes Craven (but who's name the stills manage to misspell). Set in a former



nuclear installation, a secret team of scientists create a "super soldier" for the military. The genetic misfit goes out of control and hunts down human brains for sustenance. Tension is developed well in the claustrophobic underground setting, despite some nuisance stereotypes. Lance Henriksen is called in to clear up the mess just as he's about to embark on a family-bonding camping vacation with his kids. Unaware of the nature of the situation, he drives to the compound and tells the kids to "wait outside". They don't, naturally, and are forced to rely on their wits to stay alive (successfully "bonding" in the process). There's a strong female who is able to hold her own, stupidity beyond belief (drums of radioactive waste are stored precariously in a back room, rolling out when the door is opened), and some overt sexual innuendo. Craven keeps things running along at a deft pace – the monster is fast and virtually unstoppable, hence the excitement when puny humans find themselves in a dead end passage and clueless as to where the "mind ripper" might be. The downside of the thing is an ugly trait which Craven Jr seems to have acquired from his dad: the false ending syndrome. The monster just won't lie down and die; no matter how efficiently and thoroughly it is dispatched, the thing pops out of nowhere to elicit one last shock, over and over again. At one point the survivors – having off-ed the creature for the umpteenth time – take to the air in a helicopter, only to have the brute's hand come smashing through the door once airborne. Worth a look.

MEIN PAPI *d: Jörg Buttgerit*

Essa Film, PO Box 1621, 25806 Husum, Germany

Jörg Buttgerit's early short film, *Mein Papi*, has been re-mastered and blown from its original Super-8 format to 35mm. The film, which focuses on Buttgerit's father and was filmed without his knowledge, has been a favourite of the Berlin underground club scene for some years. It's a particularly morose spectacle, watching a fat man deteriorating before your eyes, snapshots of his former, fitter self lining the mantelpiece. Perhaps the most telling glimpse into *Mein Papi* would be to translate the several titles which Buttgerit has given the new print.

1. My daddy did not know that this film was ever made.
2. This film was shot with a hidden camera.
3. He is a beer-driver in a brewery.
4. In 1973 he has strong headaches and loses his sense of orientation.
5. During brain surgery, doctors find a

little tumour.

6. Suddenly he likes sweets.
7. 1985 sees the tumour in his brain return. Another operation destroys his sense of balance.
8. In 1989 his wife, my mother, dies of cancer.
9. He watches a lot of TV.
10. On the 8th March, 1993, I find him dead in his armchair in front of the TV with coffee and cakes. He had a stroke.

Also from the Buttgerit stable comes **THE MAKING OF SCHRAMM** [ESSA], which might prove a little heavy for non-German speaking viewers, being geared towards interviews with Schramm's leading player, Florian Koerner von Gustorf. Recently completed is a Buttgerit-directed music video for Detroit-based Shock Therapy. A turgid little ditty entitled 'I Can't Let Go' (the CD single of which includes vile spoken word monologues known collectively as **THE BURNING JEHOVAH'S WITNESS AND OTHER HAPPY TALES** [SHOCK THERAPY-ITCHY WC, 17006 W WARREN, DETROIT, MICH. 48228, USA]), there doesn't seem to be any plans at present to release it via the usual JB channels and not much chance of catching it on MTV, either.

THE FOLIES OF ELODIE *d: André Génovès*

[18 cert. Angel Films]

A pair of female 'little-pants' lie at the core of this comedy of sexual manners. Not that novel a device with which to link the myriad sexual encounters in a softcore romp... but then these blue satin & fine lace knickers also narrate the tale. Yes, that's correct: narrate. In a giggling girly voice, rich in ooh la la accent, the very pants themselves escort the viewer through the movie. They hold a strange power over all who gaze upon them, too. Elodie, the demure and well-to-do woman of the title, is compelled to purchase the blue things after catching sight of them in a shop window. Once home, she puts them on and models them in front of the mirror. "New panties," she says. "They're really quite nice." So nice, that when the maid catches sight of them, she takes them from Elodie's drawer, admires herself with them on and masturbates, washing them later and replacing them back in the drawer. More sexual hijinx when Elodie loans the knickers to Solange, a friend, who goes on to make it with some guy (you don't think we're keeping track of these people, do you?). Back home, they fall off a washing line and land on a neighbour's head. As could be expected, there is a sexcapade as a result of this, but it's correlation is rather obtuse: Elodie goes to her neighbour to retrieve the knickers. Despite his amorous propositioning, Elodie rejects sex and hurries home – intact but having forgotten the underwear. The neighbour's girlfriend turns up at his door. Soft focus sex comes into play. Then, spotting the knickers, the girlfriend accuses the guy of being unfaithful. The doorbell rings again and Rose, Elodie's maid, asks for the knickers back. (Perhaps this is an example of sexual manners?) Rose and Elodie make love. The maid admits that she has already initiated Elodie's teenage

daughter into the ways of lesbian lovemaking. (The teenager, at the time, was wearing the all-important satin and lace knickers.) On surreptitiously viewing her lesbian antics, Elodie's usually reserved husband attempts to seduce Rose. He wins the maid over with, "Those panties. They understand me." **The Follies of Elodie** – or **Naughty Blue Knickers**, as is the title on this English speaking print – is neither funny nor very erotic. It is, however, peculiar to the point that it warrants investigation. While knickers are not the only inanimate object to have been utilised as a focus for the servicing of characters in softcore movies (a bed also springs to mind), it quite possibly is the first to have a free-thinking inanimate object. As if that itself isn't enough, there is also a 'sub-plot' which has Elodie sparring with an old artist friend, Edouard, who, throughout the picture, tries to draw the girl into sodomy. It's such an issue that even Elodie's daughter joins in the debate at one point. The artist, in a last ditch attempt to win Elodie over to the idea, provides documented historical evidence that buggery is neither new or unusual, but an age-old practice. With this, she succumbs and the resultant anal encounter – the film's big finish – comes replete with a rousing chorus and delicious reaction shots. Spent, Elodie tells Edouard, "Finally... a woman."

MIRANDA *d: Tinto Brass*

[18 cert. Angel Films]



A kind of Emanuele of the hotelier trade, Miranda seeks to find true love and happiness in 1950s rural Italy, engaging her time between those men who pass through her hotel. It's not one of Brass' better efforts,

who seems to have directed it on automatic pilot. However, *Miranda* does contain one noteworthy sequence: On finding themselves alone, one of Miranda's male consorts tells her, "I really like women who get wet straight away." "No, no," replies Miranda, "it's only sweat. Besides, I have to pee." There follows a female peeing scene.

Brotherly companion to the Angel Films catalogue of erotica is *A Taste of Fear*, which deals specifically with horror and dark fantasy. Releases to date have included neglected British fare and cult Italian items – a heady combination.

THE ASPHYX *d: Peter Newbrook*

[15 cert. A Taste of Fear]

Despite the reappraisals to which British horror cinema of the Seventies is subject from time to time, *The Asphyx* is a superior production but rarely credited as such. It could be that the story is a little too archaic and thus resists a straight-

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forward pigeon-holing. But accusations of it being too wordy do seem unfair, considering how director Newbrook grants the film preposterous weirdness at regular intervals. The excellent late-Robert Stephens (*The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*) plays Sir Hugo Cunningham, a scientist at the turn of the century, and member of the Psychical Research Society. He gives a lecture on how, in a series of death bed photographs, the soul appears to have been inadvertently captured on film departing the body. In a boating accident, recorded on a prototype cine camera he has developed, Cunningham sees the self-same image and determines that it isn't the soul after all, but the "Asphyx". This, the mythical spirit which enters its physical host at the moment of death, leads Cunningham to toy with the idea of immortality. He determines that if he can capture the Asphyx during its fleeting appearance, then the body itself can not die. Himself as Guinea Pig, he proves his theory correct, capturing his Asphyx, boxing it (in a coffin-shaped box) and keeping it under lock and key. But when he wishes immortality on his daughter Christina (Jane Lapotaire) and her fiancé Giles (Robert Powell), mishaps occur and they both die. Cunningham, rather than destroying his Asphyx, dooms himself to walk the earth for all eternity wracked in guilt. At a pinch, *The Asphyx* can be said to be a kind of Sci Fi variant of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*. The dialogue is also lavish ("I can't see them – the water's as black as night!") and the instances in which subjects are forced to the point of death quite nasty (ironically, this comes courtesy of electricity, poison gas and the guillotine – actual modes of sanctioned execution one time or another). The Asphyx itself might not be much of a monster, but the vague floating forms, accompanied by a cacophonous wailing, are eerie. And the whole film, a kind of mad dip deserving attention.

DARIO ARGENTO'S WORLD OF HORROR
d: Michele Soavi [18 cert. A Taste of Fear]

As can be expected given the title, this is a behind-the-scenes look at the Italian director's film making career, from early days up until *Phenomena* – in production at the time *World Of Horror* was being shot. Golden Age Argento. As well as utilising footage from the movies, there are interviews with Argento and film crew a-plenty. It is nothing short of amazing that *World of Horror* should get a release on video in Britain, given that it contains gore scenes which the BBFC have already excised from the movies themselves (i.e. the heart-stabbing scene from *Suspiria* and much stuff from *Dawn of the Dead*). What's more, despite *Tenebrae* remaining a "video nasty" in Britain, *World of Horror* shows a sequence which was cut from *that* (the closing axe hacking off an arm sequence)! It would be interesting to hear how the BBFC validate *World of Horror* and not the original movies – do they regard this as a documentary on the mechanics of film making and therefore 'acceptable'? Surely, the fact that clips here are out-of-context with regard to their

original storylines is a contention in itself? Though the die-hard fan might not learn anything new about the man and his movies, *World of Horror* does provide access to otherwise 'unobtainable' sequences, as well as out-takes and alternate footage (the 'beast in the cellar' from *Phenomena*, breaking his own thumbs so he can slip his manacles and grab the girl, is a landmark screen moment). And, unlike the recent video release of Roy Frumkes' *Documentary of the Dead*, *World of Horror* doesn't attempt to bring its subject matter up to date and ruin everything with a slap-happy, tagged-on end sequence which is neither use nor ornament.

PREY d: Norman J. Warren
[18 cert. A Taste of Fear]



A very welcome resurrection of *Prey*, possibly the only Sci Fi yarn ever made that doesn't contain any visual reference to things scientific. An alien is sent to Earth to check things out – it takes the appearance of a young man and dons the name "Anderson". But, as this is a Norman J. Warren film, the real crux of the matter lies not with the alien, but a sub-plot that takes over: Anderson 'befriends' two women living on their own – vegetarian lesbians, one of whom is also a murdering psychopath. The interplay between the threesome gets ever more frenetic as the film progresses, resulting in an effective sex-murder-throat ripping scene. This is not an ordinary movie. This is brilliant. (Watch out for the slo-mo near-drowning in three feet of murky water sequence.)

THE CREEPING FLESH d: Freddie Francis
[18 cert. A Taste of Fear]

There is something very *homely* about movies starring Peter Cushing. The fact that he invariably put his *all* into a script – no matter how puerile it may be – and didn't go on to denounce his horror film background, are both satisfying traits; on a par with the obsessional drive of, say, an Ed Wood Jr, or a John Carradine. In *The Creeping Flesh*, Cushing plays Professor Emmanuel Hildern at loggerheads with his half-brother (Christopher Lee) over a skeleton he has acquired on an expedition to New Guinea.

The skeleton is that of the mythological Shish Kang, the Evil One. When Cushing applies water to the bones in order to clean it, flesh magically begins to materialise. Then the skeleton is stolen... just as it starts to rain. Dialogue includes such lines as "Could we be on the wrong track with your electrical wave theory?" (Which, come to think of it, sounds a lot more plausible than much of the drivel spouted in the mega-testicle, *Species*.) The cheesy side to all of this is that Cushing has been experimenting on the rest of his family – hence the peculiar and lascivious way his daughter acts down at the local tavern, leading to a long and lingering attempted rape sequence. Of course, the experiments are all for the benefit of mankind and the professor simply misunderstood, not evil. The twist at the end presents the old ramblings of a madman scenario, obligatory in Cushing's day. (Director Francis and Cushing also worked together on *LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF* and *THE GHOUL* both of which see a re-release courtesy of A Taste of Fear.)

THE MASKS OF DEATH d: Roy Ward Baker
[18 cert. A Taste of Fear]

A more suited title for this apparent made for TV venture might have been 'Return To The House Of Long Shadows'. There is no principle player under the age of 94, a fact reflected in the all-round dodderly performances. Peter Cushing plays super sleuth Sherlock Holmes – back out of retirement for this one last case – and John Mills his faithful companion, Dr Watson. Anton Diffring makes an appearance, as does Ray Milland – who slurs his dialogue so badly it's a mystery Roy Ward Baker didn't go for another take... or perhaps he did and this is the best of a bad bunch, or perhaps he didn't figure Milland would make it through a second take... Quite often, the players look to the camera seemingly in expectation of the director to call "CUT". What of the story? Well, *The Masks of Death* comes together in a suitably oblique and unlikely fashion with the ridiculously astute detective traipsing halfway round the country on false leads and double bluffs. Given the cast, it's hardly surprising that the tempo doesn't lift beyond a comfortable stroll (there is more 'action' in an episode of *Prisoner Cell Block H*), but overall a fairly painless distraction nonetheless.

RATS NIGHT OF TERROR d: Vincent Dawn
[18 cert. A Taste of Fear]

Why is it that the people of the future have names like Video, Taurus, Deus, Lucifer, and Duke? Will black chicks really be called Chocolate? And why do survivors of the nuclear holocaust wander the landscape in search of food, but at the same time worry about their post-apocalyptic wardrobe and hair colour? *Rats Night of Terror* doesn't provide the answers, but does offer some cheesy special effects (like a body exploding and rodents bursting forth). When Video and his group happen upon an abandoned research centre and find food supplies – notably bags of flour – they punch and slap the things a couple of times before

...with joy and pouring the stuff
...one another's heads. "Christ, you
...one voice of reason,
...that's why our water gets polluted!" The
...and suddenly become aware that the
...are absolutely crawling with rats. The
...can't leave because the things have
...through the tyres of their futuristic
...Rats! A couple of the
...try to defeat the menace – frying
...from a cheap Italian
...Think of the diseases they
... (Something of an
...coming as it does after
...eaten several of the
...They're in the sleeping
...is it our imagination or is there an
...one of the rats is getting
...in a bag?)
...with a girl trapped in the group
...antagonism within the group
...help the situation any. The ending
...a surprise but, like the film itself,
...in an obvious kind of way.

AS TEARS GO BY d: Wong Kar-Wai
[18 cert. Made in Hong Kong]

An anapaestic reworking of Scorsese's *Mean Streets*. Small time crook Ah's necktick Fly owes money to a rival and doesn't take the debt seriously. Fly is a bit of a jerk and fails to take notice of the obvious dangers. Ah's cousin comes on the scene and allows the development of a love interest but Ah's loyalty towards Fly stands in the way of any serious progress. Fly is offered a way out of his troubles if he makes a hit for the boss he owes money to. He reckons he can do it alone without any interference from his buddy, who shows up for the assassination anyway. The *Mean Streets* influence is all a bit too obvious, but the film holds its own with some astonishing violent set pieces – the back alley assault on Fly is particularly harrowing – and a stunning finale.

DIRTY HO *d. Liu Chia Liang*
(115 cers. Made in Hong Kong)

A Shaw Brothers classic released in full widescreen. The son of an Emperor is travelling to his father's palace for the naming of the successor to the throne. However, he prefers to keep his royal status hidden. Following an injury to his leg he recruits the help of a good-hearted bandit who he teaches various martial arts skills. Together they indulge in various combat set pieces before reaching their goal. Following a rather slow opening this film develops into a fine combination of kung fu and comedy, where the visual jokes at times are genuinely hilarious. Especially funny are the training sequences where the pupil has to balance burning oil lamps on his shoulders and arms while performing special kicks.

A MOMENT OF ROMANCE *d. Benny Chan*
[118 cert. Made in Hong Kong]

A getaway driver, Wah Dee, loses favour with Trumpet, the gangland boss he works for by refusing to kill Jo Jo, a female hostage, and risking identification of the gang. The pair form an unlikely relationship but the girl's well-to-do parents aren't pleased with her involvement with this low-life thug. The



dies in a hail of machete blows. Before Jo Jo's parents can whisk her off to Canada, Wah Dee takes her away and they 'marry' after smashing out the window of a shop to steal a wedding dress and suit. Wah Dee, nose permanently bleeding, leaves her kneeling at the temple and goes in search of Trumpet to avenge his bro's death. A brutal knife fight ensues leaving all participants dead on the rain-soaked streets. Jo Jo comes running along, still in her wedding dress. Downbeat from the opening moments, this film interweaves romantic mush and mindless violence with knives and machetes replacing the obligatory blazing pistols.

TREASURE HUNTERS d. Lau Kar Wing
[15 Cert.Made in Hong Kong]

A couple of conmen go in search of some legendary lost gold. In constant pursuit are a group of incompetent cops and a scheming Lord determined to get the treasure for himself. Not as funny as *Dirty Ho*, but the fights are evidently reaching the speed and frenzied action of today's genre movies, particularly the final confrontation between the crooked Lord and his female sword-carrying sidekick and the good guys.

THE DEVIL'S EYE *d. Ingmar Bergman*
(118 cert. Tartan)

The Devil has developed a large, unsightly sty on his eye and it is pissing him off. The only remedy is to send Don Juan – currently resident in Hell and being tortured by the daily recurrent presence of beautiful women he comes close to seducing before they disappear – back to the surface of the earth to deflower Virtue, a parson's daughter. He is accompanied by Pablo his servant and an old devil who ensures they both follow the rules. Things don't go to plan though, and Pablo seduces the parson's wife, the devil is locked in a cupboard and Don Juan fails to deflower the girl. A fine production done in a theatrical style, separated into acts each introduced by a narrator. Humorous, sad and buzzing with sexual references.

THE UPSTAIRS NEIGHBOUR *d. James Merendino*
[118 cert. Screen Edge]

A young man, an author suffering writer's block, is gradually slipping into irrationality. He is convinced that the man upstairs is listening in on his phone calls. What starts as mere annoyance develops and evolves into full-blown paranoia and culminates in his belief that the man is a practising Satanist. This is a cracking piece of occult paranoia and terror.

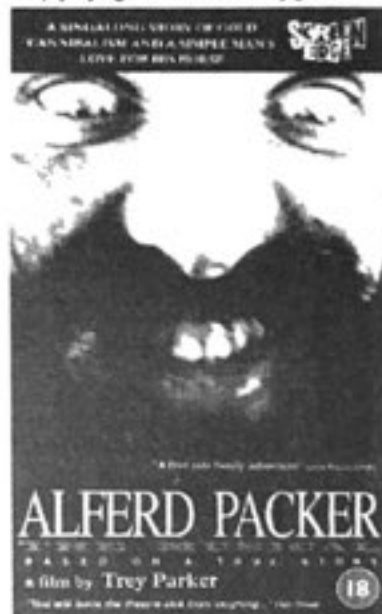


Modelled on Rosemary's Baby and Repulsion, *The Upstairs Neighbour* is a fine accolade to Roman Polanski's directorial skills. The film relies on sound to a great degree and pulls it off.

admirably. Whether it be subtle nuances like the scuffling of a chair each time his phone rings, pacing feet, or the truly chilling effect when he glimpses a figure, seemingly horned and robed, ascend the fire-escape to be greeted by rapturous applause, cheers and whistling from the gathering in the upstairs flat

ALFRED PACKER: THE MUSICAL d. *Trey Parker*
(18 cert. Screen Edge)

The film has its moments in its attempt to combine western, comedy, musical and gore film. The gore is pretty extreme, in a jokey fashion, but not in abundance. The songs are generally naïf, though occasionally humorous, but more to the given situation rather than the lyrics themselves. 'Let's Build a Snowman', for instance, where one team member's suggestion to alleviate the starvation and despair is to build a snowman. As a whole, however, *Alfred Packer* fails by simply trying to blend too many genres.



THE FRONTLINE d. Paul Hills
[18 cert. Screen Edge]

Loser James is released from psychiatric care carrying everything he had when he was admitted: pretty much zilch. He doesn't even have enough money to travel back to his home town. Borrowing bus fares and hitching rides gets him to his destination. All he needs do now is fit himself back into the community. Not so

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easy in an area infected with crime and drugs. Things pick up for a while when he re-kindles a relationship with Marion, an old flame, and manages to wear her off heroin. They go out for rides in the country. Sit and eat sandwiches and laugh a lot. But it doesn't take long before his candyfloss turns to raw sewage. The girl turns up dead, officially a suicide, but James knows better. He sets out with Marion's father to avenge her murder and ultimately returns to the crazyhouse.

Low budget restrictions show, and the director would have been better to modify the script to suit his finances. The kidnapping of an MP and subsequent police siege of the house where he is held hostage fails to convince, with one police vehicle turning up to resolve the situation. The decision to use a narrator, in the form of a dreadlocked DJ transmitting from a council flat, works well. All in all a fine debut from a director who will no doubt go on to bigger and better things.

THE POPE OF UTAH *d. Chaim Bianco / Steven Saylor*
[18 cert. Screen Edge]

Melvis Pressin is a successful televangelist who makes a fortune off the gullible viewers sending in cash donations. Del, a failed comic yearning for stardom, works at the TV station editing offensive language out of programmes.



He despises Melvis' success as much as he hates his wife. Particularly as his wife is one of the mugs who mail money to Melvis each week. He concocts a plan that will destroy Mel's career. By using his computing and editing skills he creates footage that depicts Melvis copulating with a porn star. The effect is blatantly fake. An opportunity to obtain the real thing arises when Del is working late and Melvis is fucking a cheerleader down the corridor. Armed with a camcorder, Del gets the footage. He threatens to put it on air unless Mel pays his wife a visit and shoots her dead. After all it's his fault she's such a lifeless bitch. Sure of his success, Del arrives home expecting to find the body of his wife but instead she's

there in front of the TV watching Melvis give the performance of his career. Del watches in anger and frustration, then sudden horror as Melvis pulls a gun and shoots himself in the head. At the TV station telephone donations are sky-rocketing and Melvis isn't dead, it turns out. Del becomes the new TV preacher/comic with Melvis broadcasting live from 'heaven'.

Tom McCarthy puts in a manic performance as Melvis Pressin. He's so good at what he does you can't help but reach into your pocket and look for loose change to mail him. Del too is performed with gusto by Lee Golden. There are moments of great hilarity, especially when Melvis is doing his thing to get into the viewers pockets, and when Del tries to use computer-enhanced images to blackmail Melvis and fails miserably. This movie began as a thesis for Bianco and Saylor's university degree course. The computer effects and overall look of the film belie its low budget. Excellent.

FREAKS *d. Tod Browning*
[15 cert. Visionary]

It's good to see this classic finally appear on video. Banished to movie purgatory by the latterday politically correct lobby it features a fantastic cast of strange-looking people that contemporary pc fools would have readily terminated at birth (genetically challenged and therefore liable to cause ocular affront, would perhaps be their reasoning). But **Freaks** has survived the attitudes of the moral freaks, and it still manages to send a chill down the spine. Browning scoured the country to find people suitable for the title roles and there were some even he felt were too shocking to allow on screen. He was obviously impressed with Prince Radnor the caterpillar man as he filmed him going through his regular sideshow routine. The living torso (as he was also known, and whose wardrobe consisted solely of a variety of large, colourful, knitted socks) lights a cigarette using his lips only, and he can't resist looking into the camera and await applause. "How about a big hand for Radnor, ladies and gentlemen," the Barker would demand on the fairground circuit. "Or maybe two big hands and two big legs, for that matter," he would add as Radnor slithered off his pedestal, puffing on his joint. Johnny Eck, the half-man who runs about like a chicken on his hands, outlived them all, dying only a few years ago. He made the press after grappling with a couple of crooks who broke into his home, and he was alleged to have said, "I'd have kicked the shit out of them had I been able." What a hero. All we need now is some company to release **Island of Lost Souls** which would compliment **Freaks** marvellously. It really is a shame they don't make them like this anymore.

BEST OF THE NY UNDERGROUND FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, YEAR ONE
[Film Threat, address as FTVG]

Here is a compilation of independent short films which really delivers. The whole thing opens with Murphy's Law playing live (the cameraman focuses upon a cute

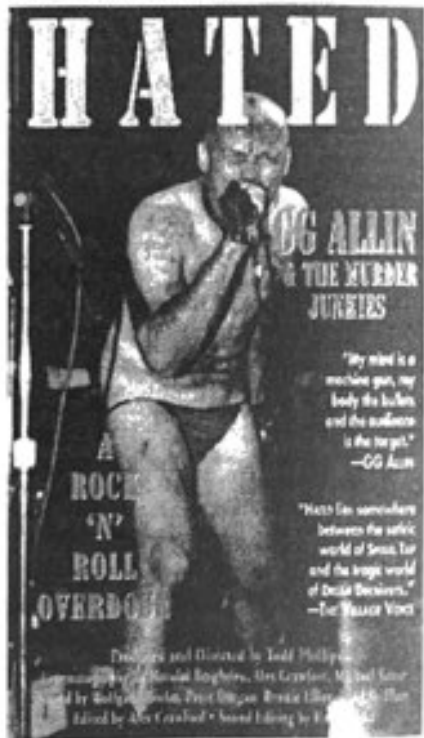
girl in the audience and runs through the shot again in slow motion, as if his – or her, all you PC-ists out there – dick just took control of the horizontal). The nine films include **Pleasant Hill, USA** (a documentary on a friendless fat kid in a sleepy town who, seeking attention, held a bank at gunpoint and killed somebody), **My Adventures in the Time Spiral** (a collection of animated shorts in which a boy's time travelling escapades result in his getting a beating at the hands of the Nazis, Elvis Presley's bodyguards, people on the Grassy Knoll), and **Spring Break** (a funny tale in which a couple of guys drive miles for no real reason). There isn't a dud film amongst them, though **Detritus** (the ruminations of a strung out addict) is somewhat out-of-place.

THE EXOTIC DANCES OF BETTY PAGE
[Cult Video, Amstel 47, 1011 PW, Amsterdam]

Part of their Cult Epics sell-through range, Cult Video in Amsterdam release the 'Betty Page Collection': **The Exotic Dances of Betty Page**, **Teasarama**, **Varietese** and two volumes of Betty in **Irving Klaw Bondage Classics**. They may be quaint and she pretty (in a motherly sort of way), but is there really any need for the world to be quite so Page crazy? Selective highlights from each of these things is more than enough to have to sit through. Incidentally, you order videos from Holland at your own risk – British Customs will stop them.

HATED: GG ALLIN & THE MURDER JUNKIES
d. Todd Phillips [Film Threat, address as FTVG]

This so easily could have taken a big dump (a la GG Allin's music), but director Phillips pulls it off with ease and an obstinacy far beyond his humble underground status. Rarely will you see a documentary – let alone a **Rock** documentary – that is as compelling as **Hated**. It just won't let go. Allin himself doesn't come over as anything other than a total balloon, with perhaps fewer brain



cells than his brother's moustache. Watch Allin take to the stage in a University lecture hall and methodically drive the audience out with his crazed antics. The nervous laughter from the audience gets even more nervous as he calls for everyone in the hall to take off their clothes. Allin, in order to get the ball rolling, goes first. Off toward the Exit hurry the first bunch of people. When Allin jumps down from the stage to encourage others to strip naked, so departs whoever's left. In come Security and the show is stopped. (As indeed should any Rock concert where chairs are deployed.) Throughout *Hated* there are many threats from Allin that one day he will kill himself. Even in a performance art event, Allin gets up to wax lyrical about how one day he will take his own life. Comes an exasperated voice from the back of the hall calling for him to do it or put up and shut up. Allin confronts the heckler – a petite girl – and smashes her in the face. At another gig, after taking a shit on the floor, hitting himself in the face and taking swings at the audience, Allin and his band soon find themselves the only people left in the club. They escape as the cops arrive. Equally as funny are the non-Allin moments, such as the ex-band member who chides that Allin isn't anything special and, to prove it, proceeds to hit himself repeatedly in the face (he's wearing a Betty Page T-shirt). GG Allin died from an overdose soon after this film was finished – not on stage mid-performance as threatened, but in a New York apartment. A postscript to *Hated* shows Allin in his coffin. The narration accuses him of having "Died like a Rock star in typical Rock star fashion". A must-see. (Write to Essa (see Mein Papi) for a complete catalogue of weird and entertaining materials.)

BUTGEL (ZURICH COP EATERS IV)

[SSI, PO Box 3252, CH-8031 Zurich, Switzerland]

This is an ultra gory black comedy of 25 minutes duration, made by a group of people who live in a squat in Switzerland. It concerns two cops who decide to act on a "tip off" and raid a house where they believe a "junkie-terrorist" copkiller lives. Once there, however, they encounter a curious ensemble of psychotics who retaliate with any weapon they can lay their hands on. One cop is hacked to pieces on the staircase, having his limbs eaten before his eyes, finally expiring when his stomach is sliced open and entrails devoured. The other cop is submitted to degradation in the front room, a pistol held to his head (the scene is notable for a screen-first: the cop literally shits himself, diarrhoea running out from his pants before the outlaws blow his head off). The whole thing ends with the female terrorist serving roast pig's ass at the dinner table. The letter which accompanied the tape (from some person signing themselves RaR) stated: "Because we made a movie, we had to go before court. We got an acquittal but now the higher authority wants us before court again. Real satire made in Switzerland... We're lost in this narrow-minded country." SSI, distributors of *Blutgeil* (Zurich Cop Eaters IV), are

also a Mail Order and publishing outfit, and the contact address for the noise metal band *Pszychisz Teror* (concert footage of whom is included at the end of this tape). Three days after the first official screening of the film, on 30 November 1993, about 18 members of the riot squad and another 15-or-so "political police" or civilian police, raided the SSI squat headquarters. The case went to court on 23 November 1994. SSI notified *Headpress* of several points pertaining to the raid which they believe the Swiss media deliberately withheld. In the words of SSI:

- The political police also went to our neighbours (a respectable family) and confiscated children's books before they realised they were in the wrong house.
- They confiscated not only stuff concerning the movie, but also generally everything we do, like our books, our records, the band videos, our T-shirts, live videos, comics etc, other videos like, for example, Frank Zappa's *200 Motels*, private letters, our addressbook, etc etc.
- Seven people were put into solitary confinement for one day, although three of them obviously had nothing to do with the film.
- A foreign person, who was our guest at the time of the raid, was expelled from the country.
- The political police filmed every one of us as we got out of our beds and were getting dressed. Bare assed on TV!
- After the confiscation, a spokesman for the police showed the film to schoolgirls and boys, minors, to "show them how bad the squatters really are" – but he doesn't have to appear before court, because he did it "with scientific interests".

TEN MONOLOGUES FROM THE LIVES OF SERIAL KILLERS/RETURN OF THE DEAD MAN d: Ian Kerkhof [Essa. Address above]

The first thing on this tape is a sequence depicting two guys engaging in 'vomit sex' – that is, one guy sticks his fingers down his throat forcing himself to puke into the open mouth of his partner who masturbates while awaiting the flood of half-digested food and bile. It's about as entertaining as watching a baby fill its nappy. When it's over – the puker purged,



the wanker cum – the supplier of the stomach contents can't help but break out into bemused laughter, saying to his partner, "You wanted it, so you got it." The eater of the vomit, the instant after orgasm, is probably thinking, "What the fuck have I just done?" But this sequence is only short so don't let it put you off, the rest of the tape is worth viewing. *Return of the Dead Man* has the old dead man of the title amble into a strange bar. He sits at a table and an overweight lady throws her leg up and exposes her blubbery cunt. She says she is God. A girl, Marie, climbs onto the bar, lifts her dress and squirts a jet of urine across the room. Scenes of the burning Waco complex dubbed with gunfire, alarm bells and screams intercut. People at the bar dance to music played by blue musicians. Later, when the dead man confronts Marie again she pisses gushingly into his face. The remainder of the film comprises the ten monologues about sex and violence. In some instances readings from fiction such as J.G. Ballard's *Crash* and *The Atrocity Exhibition*. In others, dialogue spoken by Ted Bundy, Ed Kemper, Manson and Bianchi is played over footage. Bundy's accusatory rant against pornography, for instance, plays to director Kerkhof masturbating with porn images projected onto his body. Contains some impressive looking production values and the *Dead Man* bar sequence has certain Greenaway influences with its use of music, colours, strange people, and, oh yeah... piss.

Also received: *AGAINST THE WALL* d: John Frankenheimer [18 CERT, 20-20 Vision], a gritty and compelling retelling of the Attica prison uprising, with Kyle MacLachlan as a rookie warden and Samuel L. Jackson as the Black Panther leader of the revolt. *LAST GASP* d: Scott McGinnis [18 cert, Medusa] An unusual take on the werewolf legend, with some truly incompetent acting, excruciating love scenes, and a power drill being held between someone's legs. Produced by Don (Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS) Edmonds. *MACABRE* d: Lamberto Bava [18 cert, A Taste of Fear] Stop and consider for a moment the basic premise of Lamberto Bava's directorial debut – Jane's lover is killed in a car accident so she moves into a large house and takes his decapitated head with her. Enough to twang the heart strings of the most jaded Romantic. *EVIL SENSES* d: Gabriele Lavia [18 cert, Angel] An erotic thriller about a hitman on the run, full of characters who just might be the enemy. Memorable for – believe it or not – two incredible head exploding scenes. *INVINCIBLE SHAOLIN* d: Chang Che [18 cert, MIHK] Another Shaw Bros classic from Made in Hong Kong provided in sumptuous widescreen. Standard plot with evil warlord stirring the shit between Northern and Southern Shaolin fighters. The warlords plot is exposed and he is dealt with in the appropriate manner. Tons of fights and short, sharp grunts. *BLOOD BROTHERS* d: Chang Che [18 cert, MIHK] More Shaw bro mayhem on an epic scale. Two brothers befriend a soldier after their attempts to rob him fail. They form an army to battle the rebels but

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their growing power and wealth eventually break down the friendship. Treachery, betrayal and murder ensure plenty of huge battles and killings.

MUSIC

The formats which we note below are the formats in which we received the music. They could well be – and probably are – available in all sorts of other weird and wonderful incarnations.

IANUS *Dimosioypallike Retire* [CD]
Harsh Dept. Productions, PO Box 75032, 17610
Athens, Greece

The opening bars to the first track on this three track album will have you squirming as surely as if 1,000 worms had gotten under your skin. This because of its highly intrusive usage of silence. A simple piano refrain plays, awaits several beats too many in silence, then the same few notes are knocked out again. Over and over. It gets a little more 'pleasant' when a synth comes in and eliminates the noiseless gaps with its two-note fancy. The second piece on the album is a wandering melody, accompanied by woodblocks, which more than once conjures images of Sofren and Mari debating the purpose of man's existence... Subtitled "a work for two radio stations", both tracks, according to the sleeve notes, ought to be transmitted simultaneously. (Presumably, courtesy of two radio sets and not just two stations.) The third track on the album presents "what, approximately, someone would listen to, if he was attending – by two receivers – the two radio stations transmitting Ianus". The result is hardly comforting – a return to the dialectic of track one, but giving the listener something else to worry about.

VERDER *Kapotte Muziek* [CD]
Harsh Dept. Productions (address above)

The first CD from Kapotte Muziek – a band which exists in the form of "musical ideas", being "recycled" by the other participants independently to one another. (What if the tape came back and the previous guys had done something really bad like started to sing a song?) The four pieces on Verder have been recorded in collaboration with Merzbow, Agencement, Telepherique and The Haters, respectively. In the case of the latter, a two minute section taken from a live recording of the Canadian group, "sampled" to form a longer piece consisting of white sounds. The rest of the album leans towards the "ambient" (even Merzbow's efforts). The final recycle of Verder was for a copy of Shonen Knife's 712 at the local Two-for-One Shoppe.

SACRILEGIUM *Devil Doll* [CD]
Renaissance Records, Dist. The Wild Places,
621-A Hanover St., Santa Cruz, CA 95062, USA

The first we heard of Devil Doll was with the arrival of a modest sampler cassette, the words *A Mere Sip of the Poison* hand-scrawled onto its label. A little booklet accompanied the tape, and the whole package wrapped in a black ribbon. A combination of original music and

CHICKEN WORLD by Rancho Diablo [CD, MUTE]

A telephone interview with Steve Martin and Adam D. John of Rancho Diablo
David Kerekes

DAVID KEREKES What kind of influences would you say films have on your music?

STEVE MARTIN [vocals and sleeve artist] I just like the attitude really, of low budget splatter kind of stuff. It's got a good feel to it. I like to bring that across [in the music].

KEREKES So you don't like have pictures in your head when you're writing music?

MARTIN Sometimes. You can look at a Robert Williams thing and you think – yeah! And it inspires you to do something really insane. But usually the artwork comes afterwards. We try and keep as much control of our own stuff as we can.

KEREKES Your music is a fusion. It's not Dance, it's not Rock.

MARTIN We just steal bits from everywhere really and put our own psyche over the top.

KEREKES What kind of musical influences would you say you had?

MARTIN Well, myself, it's stuff like Foetus, Suicide, Residents, Pere Ubu, that kind of stuff.

KEREKES There are no Prog rockers in the band?

MARTIN Ha ha ha! You could call Adam, the lead guitarist, a Prog Rocker – but we keep him disciplined. He was playing me fuckin' Ozric Tentacles yesterday. Atrocious. I don't know if you like them?

KEREKES Ozric Tentacles?

MARTIN Yeah. It started off well, then it started to go all hippyish. Dreadful guitar solos.

KEREKES I'm in a regression at the moment, listening to Prog Rock.

MARTIN Have you heard our album? You'll like the first track. Very Prog Rock – not intentional, it just happened that way.

KEREKES What about Folk Rock?

MARTIN Folk Rock? I'll stick you on to Adam, our Splatter expert.

KEREKES Hello. You've just been introduced as a "Splatter expert".

ADAM D. JOHN [lead guitar] I wouldn't go so far as to say that myself. I like a bit of Splatter now and then but sometimes I like stuff a little more life-affirming. [Conversation turns to Mondo films and the fact that Adam edits sequences down for use as back projection at Rancho Diablo live shows.] What we try to do is just collate a lot of stuff – not necessarily the more obvious stuff like operations and car crash-kind of back projections, but very chaotic sort of stuff. In addition to that we've filmed our own little sequences on Super-8 and transferred them to video. Mutating body parts and these weird prosthetic genitals.

KEREKES Quite a psychedelic light show?

JOHN I just remember seeing a few bands from way back, like the Butthole Surfers and stuff, the impact they had on me as a youngster with the bizarre imagery that they were using – really kind of disturbing – and the general mayhem on stage. That's what made me aware of what could be done. Not necessarily reproduce that, but do it in our own way. What I did find interesting reading the last Headpress was that you met up with Marisa [Carr].

KEREKES She lives round there, doesn't she?

JOHN She lives just round the corner from me, actually. The next road down. And she's been part of the live set now for the last couple of months. Doing a bit of performance with us, taking it in another direction altogether.

KEREKES Has she been opening the show?

JOHN Yeah. There's an instrumental track on the album – "Sacrifice 3000" – which we open with, and, basically, she does her thing. Psyches up the people for what they're about to receive. Fuck playing gigs every week, we just do one-off's now. Theme nights. Play some films, have a hostess for the evening – the idea being you take people out for a night and expose them to lots of different types of entertainment. A good time for all, really.

KEREKES What is your own musical background?

JOHN Guitar-wise I'm pretty sloppy, I suppose. I just like anyone who makes an evil racket. My influences are Sixties Garage Trash Rock – people like Pussy Galore. Nothing too technical. Electricity – sculpting, playing around with feedback. I'm no maestro, but I know what I'm doing when it comes to feedback.

KEREKES Do you use tape loops?

JOHN The way we have been working up to now is drum machine based, so we are kind of limited in that respect. The patterns are really good and the samples are all down as we want them to be – there's no room for fuck ups. Also, it adds an urgency to the proceedings. There's no room for drum solos or extended guitar work outs. It's like we've got 30 minutes to do this and so put everything into it.



soundtrack snippets from feature films (including the trailer for Lindsay Shonteff's 1963 *The Devil Doll*), a single play of the tape was enough to open up the Third Ear (or something). Hard hitting 'metal' arrangements (such as the devastating rendition of *The Prisoner* theme) slipping effortlessly into full-blown classical orchestration, the sampler was incentive enough to go and investigate Devil Doll further. A brief message to Renaissance Records in California, suppliers of the tape, was followed by the swift arrival on our doorstep of Devil Doll's *Sacrilegium* album. Recorded at Tivoli Studios, *Sacrilegium* opens to a vicious

pounding, like thigh bones on pig skin. Voices rising choir-like and the resonating chords of a Cathedral organ set the controls for a waking dream. There are no tracks as such, just the single hour-long journey – a mad midnight dash through expressionist corridors, through streets of brick facades and stubby gables, into black forests, up to and beyond the dance halls of Brunhild's castle. While the sound has distinct splashes of Van Der Graf Generator and Goblin across its face, Devil Doll hardly conjure images of the typical 'contemporary' band. There is an archaism which permeates throughout. Fronted by the mysterious Mr Doctor, Devil Doll has its bases in Italy and Slovenia. Formed in 1987, they remain virtually unknown outside of a few hundred hardcore fans – a factor attributable to Mr Doctor's insistence that the band burn their bridges at every turn. Making ridiculously limited run albums, for instance, obtainable only at concerts (of which the band do few and usually only in places like the Trnovo church in Ljubljana). Recent repressings – such as *Sacrilegium* on the Renaissance label – will allow a greater audience to savour Devil Doll. Other albums include *The Mark of the Beast* (of which only one copy was pressed!), *The Girl Who Was*



Death (musical interpretations of each of the 17 episodes of *The Prisoner* TV series), *Eliogabalus* (inspired by an Antonin Artaud work), and *The Sacrilege of Fatal Arms* (incorporating segments of a film written and directed by Mr Doctor).

THE WORST! Josh Alan [CD]

Gerse, 231 Portobello Road, London, W11 1LT

Kind of inevitable, *The Worst!* is a new musical based on the life of Ed Wood Jr, 'The Worst Director of All Time'. Written and produced by Josh Alan Friedman (working under the abbreviated 'Josh Alan') with, claims the sleeve note, the authorisation of Kathy Wood and the Ed Wood estate. Friedman – who wrote the magnificently sleazy *Tales Of Times Square* and has done much work with his artist brother, Dave – appears to have made a concerted effort to have *The Worst!* live up to its title. Tracks such as 'Let Me Die In Angora', 'Tor's Theme' (a clumsy, bumbling waltz), and 'Criswell Predicts' certainly invoke images of greasepaint, bright lights and a stage bare save for the lone crooner in the middle ('Tor! Tor! Hear the crowds roar!'), but then, it's not exactly a pleasant image, is it? Ed Types Plan 9' is the sound of a typewriter being hammered furiously and one of the better tracks. Whether or not *The Worst!* has yet been performed in front of a live audience isn't clear. Chances are Friedman (whose heart is in the right place) devised the whole thing as some kind of latter day take on Paul Simon's *The Producers* – a deliberately tacky, bad production but one which would ultimately, hopefully, win everyone over. Not a chance. Even as a potential cult item it's pushing it.

HARD TIMES Laughing Hyenas [CD]
Touch and Go

Larissa Strickland thumps out some mighty mean guitar hooks on this, the Laughing Hyenas third feature-length album. *Hard Times* finds the band on a Blues kick, though to be honest, the gorgeous thrill of 'Stay' and 'Slump' comes to naught when the grief and dejection of 'Home Of The Blues' kicks in.

Who listens to that old man Negro music nowadays? Especially when it sounds like Mick Jagger? Fortunately, things pick up again with the louder faster more feedback of 'Just Can't Win'.

4TH AND BACK Hissanol [CD]
Alternative Tentacles

Part Andy Kerr (NoMeansNo) and part Scott Henderson (...er...), Hissanol's jiggery-pokery music, recorded by way of correspondence (*4th and Back*, geddit), sounds awfully like R. Stevie Moore.

BEAST OF DREAMS Pain Teens [CD]
Trance

This is great. A proliferation of psychedelic headiness with a tip of the hat to Opal, Butthole Surfers, Steve Reich, Kathy Acker even, but remaining distinctively 'Pain Teens' in the process. From the dark and menacing 'Swamp' to the dreamy, drowning 'Coral Kiss' – which concludes on a stereoscopic tape loop – the band shift through some lonely places without so much as a backward glance. Thick rhythms, curious tweakings, and a singer who registers high on the groovy register, *Beast of Dreams* might be more calculating than the noise of Pain Teens' previous offerings but doesn't once fail to deliver. You would do well to buy this.

BACKFEEDMAGNETBABE Sixteen Deluxe [Cass]
Trance

We adore anyone who admits "I've got me a wide, wide mouth" (especially if they're a girl). Sixteen Deluxe have guitars that transcend the normal guitar sound – they splash across the speakers, resonating with the strain, the merest fragment, of a melody. Wayward panning, distortion and a love that knows no bounds. Glorious. Buy this one, instead.

AVOCADO SUITE Fortran 5 [CD]
Mute

A series of electronic grunts, tweets and 'funny' noises, *Avocado Suite* is the aural equivalent of *Father Knows Best* or like watching several of the *Carry On* movies back-to-back – it can be done but it's as annoying as fuck. However, we

would gladly play this beat-free techno junk rather than gouge out our own eyes, which is more than can be said for the likes of Nitzer Ebb *BIG HIT* [CD, MUTE] (Big Shit more like) and Portion Control *THE MAN WHO DID BACKWARD SOMERSAULTS* [CD, TEQ MUSIC?]

A HOUSE FOR THE DEAD AND A PORCH FOR THE DYING David E Williams [CD]
Ospedale Records, Po Box 2422, Philadelphia, Pa. 19147, USA

David E Williams has come up with a little gem in the form of his debut album. Williams sounds for all the world like the progeny of David Bowie, Crash Test Dummies with music and lyrics from Andrew Lloyd Webber in the final stages of cerebral cancer. With track titles like 'The Dead Hymen' and 'Thumbelina Toad Slut', one could be forgiven for expecting some tired nerve-shredding Death Metal diapason. Instead we get something quite splendid, almost primitively unique. The songs, or dirges to be more accurate, delve into human anxieties, madness and perversion, the bizarre lyrics combining well with the symphonic instrumentals. 'Little Sap and Varicose', a blackly humorous number concerning a young boy watching his grandfather have a heart attack while masturbating, is particularly good. Other highpoints include 'Sandra Lindsey' a slow, enigmatic number with lyrics like: "Nephew's nibbling on a portion/of his girlfriend's last abortion/No scrotum of my son will be a cathedral/for maggot, mealworm or boweevil." The fact that Williams doesn't sing, more recites with a croaking groan, makes it all the more strange and alluring. The whole thing is a euphonious celebration of body fluids, aborted fetuses, disease, and death. Highly recommended.



PUSSY Kathy Acker [CD]
Codex (Address as Cranked Up Really High)

Spoken word. Pussy matures into adulthood. She might be fully clothed but recognises her nakedness. She could be pregnant, but isn't. She is suddenly aware of strangers and is unable to change her sanitary napkin for fear of men in every room. Kathy Acker bites down on *Pussy*. Tales of friends and whores, disaffected youth and punk boys. A bloody Kafka with period pains.

OVER AND OUT Tar [Cass]
Touch and Go

HEADPRESS

The band themselves describe this, their latest and last ever album, as a "sonic downer". A good place to start. No more touring, no more live dates (except on weekends) for the boys from... somewhere near Peoria? As a mid-life album this'd be unbearable. As a reckless, who-gives-a-hoot farewell it is still unbearable. Multi-layered guitars and soul-wrenching vocals from deep in the mix.

TEENAGE BEETLES/L'AMOUR DES BÊTES

Voodoo Muzak/RWA [CD]

Amanita, Etzeperia, 64240, Urcaray, France

From what can be gathered, Voodoo Muzak and RWA do a lot of work together. This collection compiles two of their albums which may or may not have been previously available as independent units. Voodoo Muzak have a natty drum sound, and edgy guitars and vocals with which to compliment it. RWA are more on the crazy vocals side of the tree, singing in French. The two bands can also be found on the 7" EP single **VOUS TREMBLEZ DANS LE VOMI** [AMANITA] and the compilation CD **AHI... QUELLE BETTE JOURNEE!** [AMANITA], the latter also containing tracks by Krackhouse, XRatedX and Escare. This all points in one direction: Amanita are putting out a lot of interesting stuff in some of the finest packaging we have ever seen. For an independent outfit the presentation is nothing short of amazing. The **DEAD MEN DON'T RAPE** double 7" single (it might be called something else but that's the title we like) is an impressive design by any label's standards, be it independent or major. Here the vinyl sandwich a 32 page booklet consisting of silk-screen prints (of gynaecological close-ups and penis amputation) reproduced on heavy stock paper. Collector material to be sure - who needs to play the records?



APPARATUS Apparatus [CD]

Cargo

Apparatus do imbue their Industrial dance proceedings with a little texture, but the vocals still have nothing going for them. Probably the best thing here is the track 'Cock Panther' in which the music is accompanied by a conversation lifted, presumably, from a telephone chat line or a CB radio. One guy asks a giggling girl, "Tell me, how big is your pussy?" ("Well... Big enough," she responds.) "What's the biggest dick you ever seen, honey? About

six inches?" (Let's hope that's not a rhetorical question.) There is also a wonderful sample which goes, simply, "Cock."

TAKE IT EASY CHICKEN Mansun [sampler Cass]

Contenders for the Oasis/Blur/Battle of the Bands/George Formby rockin' poppin' crown, Mansun (formerly Manson) imbibe their Chester-orientated sound with some rough boys guitar noise and washboard skiffle drum technique (as is the custom of late, or was until very recently). The vocals are, naturally, a lazy drawl but the vocalist can hold his notes when so required. The stand-out track in this three track sampler is 'Naked Twister', surprising as it's pseudo-funk by way of Guns 'n' Roses. The opening lines to the last number, 'Drastic Surgeon', go "Shop at Kwik Save and you make a good savin'! Difference in prices is truly amazin'" Horrible as it may sound, it's starting to make us laugh. Charlie'll be calling for our heads...

HELL IS OTHER PEOPLE Guapo [7" EP]

Power Tool, PO Box 1471, London, N5 2L7

High-falutin' syncopated thrash sound with an opening track called 'Joe Coleman Song' ("Don't sell till it's paid off your dues?"). The sleeve provides a literary distraction in a short story (by Mark Collinson) about perverted Zuncle Madman with a hole in his head.

SO GOOD Zeven [CD single]

Magic Zebra

There is a violin solo on 'So Good' by a Lebanese violinist (it makes a difference). After that you best run out of the room quick. Or turn off your CD apparatus. Or, to be on the safe side, both. Every other note on this summer breezy, Sixties throwback, sucks.

LIFE DOCUMENTS The Gerogerigegege [7" single]

Fourth Dimension, PO Box 63, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6YU

Yes, we laughed our collective socks off with this one. Several nights ago the TV went doo-lally - it don't turn off when the button is pressed (we have to watch it all the time now...). Around about this time, the fridge stopped working. And the stereo started to 'crackle'. As luck would have it, Life Documents turns out to be a record with a 'built-in' crackle on the Right channel. We determined that the speaker had had it and threw the whole Music Centre out, only to discover that the crackle follows the record around. Juntaro Yamanouchi is the one-man Gerogerigegege, and a pretty funny guy he is too.

TEENAGE LARD Rancid Hell Spawn [7" EP]

Wrench Records, BCM Box 4049, London, WC1N 3XX

Mr Pickwick's TV Cartoon Themes as played by the Set Your Poems To Music orchestra. Crazy keyboard sound, funny titles and supersonic arrangements. A delight... if you're a redundant trombone player.

Also received: **VIA WOHLSTAND: GERMAN-JAPANESE NOISE-COMPILATION** [CD, HUMAN WRECKORDS, PO BOX 335, D-10925

BERLIN, GERMANY] Looked good, arrived broken. **Ed Tomney SAFE** [CD, MUTE] Soundtrack to Todd Haynes' film about an LA housewife allergic to the Twentieth Century called Mrs P. **VIA LORD OF ILLUSIONS** [CD, MUTE] Horror movie music with Erasure and Simon Boswell. **VIA THE FUTILITY OF A WELL ORDERED LIFE** [CD, ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES] Eight years since the first catalogue sampler, this brings the Alternative Tentacles programme bang up to date - from Jello Biafra's Lard to the A.T. departure Chill E.B. Clay **People THE IRON ICON** [CD, CARGO] Fails to live up to the line "Her only sanctuary/Is the coming of the giant killer bees" ('Rusted Iron Turning Wheel') **Richard hell GO NOW** [CD, CODEX] Spoken word with musical accompaniment. Possibly autobiographical drug induced stupors from the man who should know, ex-member of the Heartbreakers and Television. **Hooten 3 Car DRIVER** [7" SINGLE, OUT OF STEP] Edgy mood music for the dispossessed. Probably none of our business but isn't the drum sound a tad dry? **Cello A L'OMBRE DU TEMPS** [CD, SYMBIOSE] Folk - in an early 10,000 Maniacs kind of way, sung in French. A great album, invoking images of something always out of reach. **NON MIGHT!** [CD, MUTE] Boyd Rice returns to pay a musical tribute to Ragner Redbeard's **Might Is Right**. Would have sounded a lot funnier if David Thewlis had done it.

OTHER LATE BITS

Steven Johnson Leyba, interviewed way back in issue #8 and responsible for the cover art of **Critical Vision**, is now a Priest of the Church of Satan. Working with fellow Apache painter, Bill Soza, the two are preparing an exhibition titled 'American Indian/American Devil'. It is set to "explore metaphorically and literally connotations of the Western Devil, The Other, The Heathen, The Heretic, and The Terrorist in a modern context." Opens April 30 '96 at the Renegade Gallery of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Runs until May 29th. Call/write Eliza van den Berg (505) 262 1569/ PO Box 9307 Albq. N.M. 87119, USA.

THE GEIS LETTER (\$1 per issue/\$2 outside US)

Richar Geis, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211-0408

Subtitled 'Thought Crime, Dogmacide & Intellectual Heresy' this monthly newssheet from Richard Geis (science fiction and porn writer) is full of vitriolic rants against American policies of all kinds. Waco, Ruby Ridge, Oklahoma bombing, film and book reviews. Being monthly it is up-to-date and very topical in its own likeable way.

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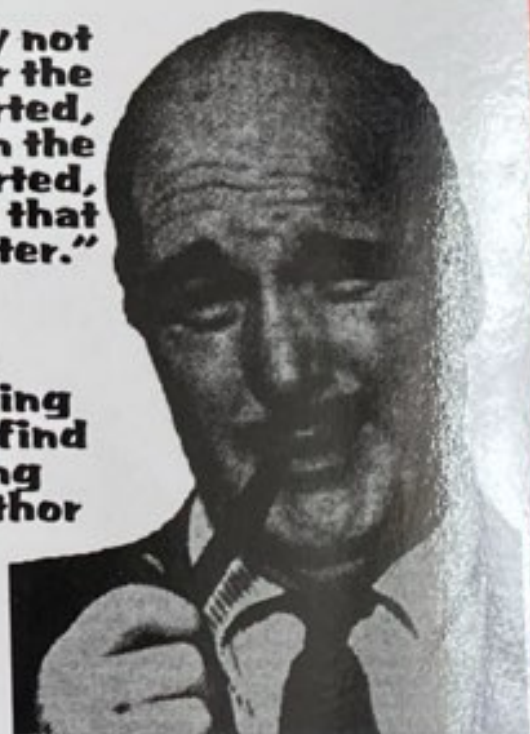
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